

# Winter Heating and Energy Municipal Roundtables

A REPORT OF THE MASSACHUSETTS ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE



COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL  
MARTHA COAKLEY

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Massachusetts has some of the highest energy costs in the country and this summer residents saw skyrocketing costs for both oil and gas. In recent weeks, energy prices have declined, partly due to the effects of the global financial crisis. This winter, the volatility of the energy market may result in another surge in energy prices and as a result, residential, municipal and commercial customers will face serious challenges. Since the prices commercial and residential consumers pay for heating oil, natural gas and electricity are a function of a global market, individual consumers are unable to have any significant effect upon increasing prices. As such, many Massachusetts residents will have difficulty paying for heat this winter – a serious problem that could have a dramatic effect on public health and safety. Oil heat customers, including senior citizens on fixed incomes, may be unable to afford to fill their oil tanks this winter and many families may fall dangerously behind on their heating and electricity payments.

These increased costs will lead to an increased demand in assistance throughout the state. State and local officials and nonprofit groups must prepare in advance in order to meet this increased demand. For many Massachusetts residents, this winter will be their first time seeking assistance. As such, many may not know where to look for information. For residents who meet the income guidelines, one immediate solution to the heating crisis is the [Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program \(LIHEAP\)](#) which provides fuel assistance to low income households. In addition to LIHEAP, natural gas and electric customers may be eligible for a low-income discount on their utility rates.

In response to this crisis, Governor Deval Patrick and the Legislature approved the expenditure of \$10 million in state funding to supplement federal fuel assistance funds. In addition, the Governor and legislative leaders appointed a [Winter Energy Costs Task Force](#) in July 2008. Recommendations from the Task Force report, released on October 30, 2008, included recommendations to expand eligibility for federal fuel assistance to help an additional 55,000 Massachusetts families heat their homes this winter.

The Attorney General's Office (AGO) commends the Task Force's initiative in making this issue a top priority for the state and for its commitment to allocating state resources to assist more residents ability to meet their winter heating costs.

Without such changes, a large portion of the population will not meet the income eligibility threshold necessary to qualify for assistance. For these individuals, community agencies can provide information on other available resources and services in the community.

Municipalities can provide supplemental fuel assistance or serve as a central source of information on program availability to local residents. Many municipalities have already begun reaching out to vulnerable populations and partnering with local nonprofit entities in order to provide services to the community.

As more and more Massachusetts residents address volatile energy costs, many will resort to using alternative heating sources in their homes. Public safety professionals are concerned about increases in both fires and carbon monoxide poisonings this winter as a result of the increased use of these devices. Municipalities are relying on their fire chiefs to assist in educating the public on the potential dangers associated with improper maintenance and use of home heating equipment. For example, the [Department of Fires Services](#) has embarked upon a statewide campaign, called [Keep Warm, Keep Safe](#), which will provide extensive public awareness as well as information and training for public safety personnel. As prices rise and resources are scarce, public health officials are warning about a potential increase in the number of illnesses and deaths from hypothermia.<sup>1</sup>

In response, state leaders, including the Attorney General's Office, are working together to provide residents with the tools they need to manage their energy use more effectively through increased energy efficiency and renewable technologies. In order to encourage the increased implementation of innovative energy saving ideas, Massachusetts recently enacted the [Green Communities Act](#). The Act supports the development of renewable energy such as solar and wind, requires the exploration of new technologies such as smart meters, net metering and smart grid technologies and sets aside funds to provide incentives to municipalities to engage in energy efficiency and renewable development.

Governor Patrick's [Winter Energy Costs Task Force](#) also calls for increased investments in energy efficiency and weatherization to enable Massachusetts residents, municipalities and businesses to save money on fuel costs now and in the future.

The AGO is committed to help promote and encourage greater energy efficiency and will facilitate interagency collaboration and greater awareness at the local and state level of the financial, public health, and public safety implications of volatile energy costs.

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1 National Weather Service. Paducah, Kentucky. [Winter Weather Safety](#). 13 Nov. 2008. <<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/images/pah/pdf/winterweathersafety.pdf>>.

There are additional steps that should be taken to meet the needs of all Massachusetts residents this winter. Based on the testimony presented at the Winter Heating and Energy Roundtables, the Massachusetts Attorney General recommends the following:

1. Facilitate coordination between municipalities and other energy experts and stakeholders to provide education and resources to those interested.
2. Each fall, the Attorney General will host an Annual Winter Heating and Energy Roundtable so that communities can come together on a yearly basis to discuss their concerns and potential solutions to winter heating and energy problems.
3. Encourage greater allocation of federal and state resources to assist residential, municipal and commercial consumers in meeting their winter heating costs. This effort should include advocating for increased LIHEAP funding for Massachusetts residents.
4. Explore developing a Massachusetts Oil Heat Efficiency Fund to provide low interest loans and grants to homeowners for energy efficient upgrades to their oil heat equipment.
5. Assist communities with targeting information and resources to vulnerable populations that often have a more difficult time accessing information.
6. State and local governments should analyze the energy impacts of new programs, regulations and legislation.

As energy costs continue to fluctuate and more Massachusetts families and businesses continue to struggle, state and local officials and community stakeholders must come together to tackle the potential problems that face consumers during the winter heating season. We look forward to working with officials across the Commonwealth to implement the recommendations set forth in this report. These are challenging times, but as always, we in Massachusetts are up for the challenge.





# MESSAGE FROM ATTORNEY GENERAL MARTHA COAKLEY

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As the chief law enforcement officer, energy ratepayer advocate, and consumer advocate for the Commonwealth, I am pleased to offer this report and recommendations for examining the complex matters regarding winter heating and energy. In late September and early October of 2008, I travelled across the Commonwealth and heard testimony about winter heating and energy issues from a diverse group of community leaders including legislators, local elected officials, community action advocates, and other experts in the field. This report is a result of these roundtable events, which were held in Fitchburg, Plymouth, Holyoke, and Salem.

My goal in issuing this report is to provide community leaders with information and recommendations to tackle public health and safety concerns that will arise this winter, to bring such leaders together to share common concerns and solutions and to highlight innovative energy efficiency strategies that have been successfully implemented by many leaders in the business community.

In Massachusetts, the Attorney General's Office (AGO) serves as the ratepayer advocate in state and federal regulatory proceedings involving natural gas and electric rates. The AGO is charged with ensuring that consumers are protected from unfair or deceptive business practices, including practices regarding home heating. Despite our diligent advocacy to keep energy prices as low as possible, much of the recent increase in the price of home heating oil and natural gas in Massachusetts is related to the price of the commodities and world markets which operate outside of the regulatory arena. Massachusetts, like the rest of the Northeast, has no substantial indigenous fossil fuel source and is at the "end of the pipeline" for the purpose of fossil fuel imports to meet energy needs.

As a result of this price volatility and geographic location, Massachusetts residents, businesses and municipalities are particularly hard hit. The cost of heating a home with oil this winter is predicted to rise as much as 23 percent from last year, and the cost of heating with natural gas is expected to increase by about 18 percent.<sup>2</sup> When combined with an anticipated 6 percent hike in electricity

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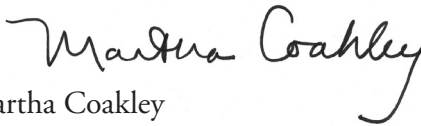
2 Energy Information Administration Short Term Energy and Winter Fuels Outlook. Washington, D.C. Energy Information Administration. 7 Oct. 2008. <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/>>.

costs, increasing costs for food and other staples, and the prospect of job losses, the Commonwealth is facing a financial crisis. It is likely that some Massachusetts residents may be forced to choose between heating their homes and buying food, medication or other necessities.

In this report, we summarize the testimony offered at the Winter Heating and Energy Roundtable series. These roundtables were convened by the AGO in partnership with local elected officials and leaders from the host municipalities. We heard testimony from state and local government officials, public safety personnel, and representatives from community action programs, faith communities, elder service agencies, and anyone with an interest in this issue. The roundtables provided an opportunity to share ideas, concerns, and best practices to help ensure that vulnerable residents remain warm and safe this winter, and also to alert consumers, municipalities and businesses in order to prepare for the upcoming heating season and beyond.

This roundtable series was a great success. By bringing together those who tackle these issues, we have assisted in opening lines of communication and continued collaboration. I am encouraged by the many innovative strategies being implemented at the local level and am pleased to highlight some of these approaches in this report. I look forward to continuing this important discussion as we move into the winter heating season.

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Martha Coakley". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Martha" and last name "Coakley" clearly distinguishable.

Martha Coakley  
Massachusetts Attorney General

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Co-Hosts

The energy roundtable events would not have been possible without the generosity of the co-hosts, all of whom graciously welcomed us into their communities:

Senate President Therese Murray  
Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, City of Salem  
Mayor Michael Sullivan, City of Holyoke  
Mayor Lisa Wong, City of Fitchburg

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS REPORT

The energy roundtable participants contributed heavily to this report by sharing their expertise and creative ideas through their thoughtful and insightful testimony:

Kathleen Anderson, Director of the Holyoke Office of Planning and Development  
Robert Ansin, Chief Executive Officer of MassInnovation  
Jeff Barz-Snell, Member of the Salem Renewable Energy Task Force  
Robert Bradford, President of the North Shore Chamber of Commerce  
Chief G. Edward Bradley, Plymouth Fire Department  
Chief David Cody, Salem Fire Department  
Massachusetts State Representative Stephen L. DiNatale  
Bill Driscoll, Chair of the Town of Plymouth Finance Committee  
Massachusetts State Representative Jennifer L. Flanagan  
Peter Forman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce

George Gantz, Senior Vice President for Customer Service and Communications for Unitil Corporation

Frank Gorke, Director of the Division of Energy Efficiency with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources

Stephen C. Huntley, Executive Director of Valley Opportunity Council

Massachusetts State Representative Michael F. Kane

Massachusetts State Representative John D. Keenan

Massachusetts State Senator Michael R. Knapik

Mary Ann Kobylanski, LIHEAP Director for the New England Farm Workers Council

Brian Kuhn, Chair of the Town of Plymouth Energy Committee

Chief David LaFond, Holyoke Fire Department

Paul Lanzikos, Executive Director of North Shore Elder Services

James Lavelle, Manager of Holyoke Gas and Electric, and President of the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce

Virginia LeClair, Environmental Coordinator for the Town of Dedham

Paul L'Heureux, Director of Facilities for Salem Public Schools

Laura MacNeil, Deputy Director of North Shore Community Action Program

Kathleen McDermott, Executive Director of Montachusett Opportunity Council

Joan Meschino, Chair of the Hull Board of Selectmen

Richard Quintal, Chair of the Plymouth Board of Selectmen

Mark Reed, Director of Public Affairs for NSTAR

Scott Ridley, Energy Consultant with Ridley & Associates, Inc.

Joseph Rosenberg, Energy Director of Springfield Partners for Community Action

Chief Kevin D. Roy, Fitchburg Fire Department

Chief Anthony Scott, Holyoke Police Department

Lisa Spencer, Director of Energy Programs for the South Shore Community Action Council

Tom Szocik, Executive Director of the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority

Massachusetts State Senator Bruce E. Tarr

Ed Terceiro, Executive Vice President of Mount Wachusett Community College

# I. BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION: THE ENERGY LANDSCAPE IN MASSACHUSETTS

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This winter, the cost of heating a home with oil is predicted to rise an average of 23 percent from last year, and the cost of heating with natural gas is expected to rise by 18 percent.<sup>3</sup> As a result, the budgets of families, businesses and municipalities are likely to be significantly impacted. While the magnitude of the impact is likely to be felt the most by low-income and fixed-income customers, middle class families will also face serious challenges this winter. In fact, municipal officials and human service providers increasingly report being contacted by middle class families who have never before sought assistance.

Businesses face a similar challenge. While record energy prices hurt all corporations, small businesses feel a disproportionately greater impact. Businesses with slim profit margins have less flexibility to absorb price hikes or pass them along.<sup>4</sup> The increased cost of electricity and natural gas over the past several years has created a cycle that exacerbates the burden placed on businesses during an already difficult economic period. As spending decreases, businesses must cut back on costs, sometimes leading to lay-offs. The higher the cost of energy for consumers, the less likely such consumers will be able to invest resources with local businesses.

## THE HIGH COST OF ENERGY

### OIL AND NATURAL GAS

The average Massachusetts household uses three to four tanks of oil, or 800 to 900 gallons, during the heating season, which is considered October to April. This winter it is projected to cost Massachusetts households heating with oil \$3,200 to \$3,300 to heat their homes. As a

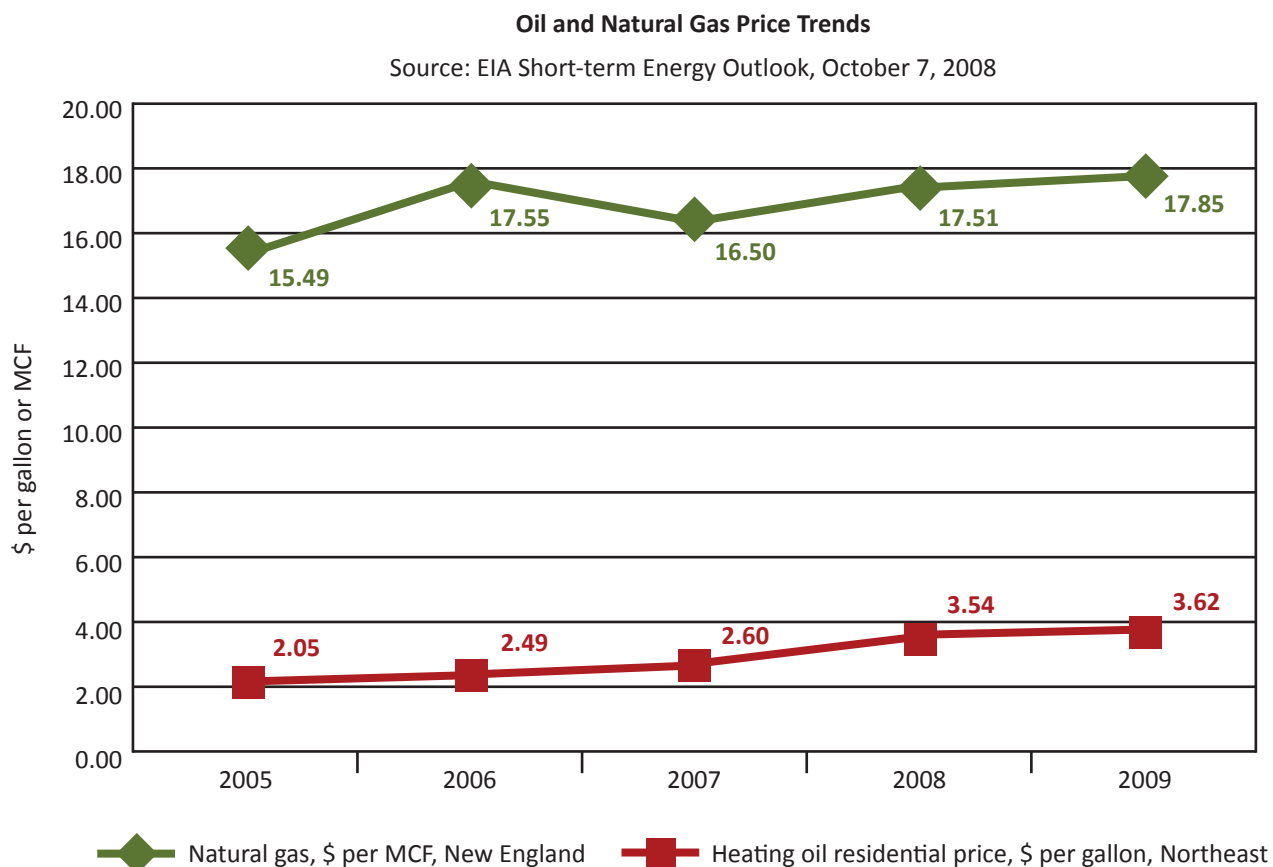
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<sup>3</sup> Energy Information Administration Short Term Energy and Winter Fuels Outlook. Washington, D.C. Energy Information Administration. 7 Oct. 2008. <<http://www.eia.doe.gov/>>.

<sup>4</sup> High Energy Prices Impact Businesses and Consumers in 2007. Washington, D.C. National Ocean Industries Association. 28 April 2008. <<http://www.noia.org/website/download.asp?id=3223>>.

result of high prices, Massachusetts low-income residents, including those who have received fuel assistance, may run out of oil as soon as late December or early January and may turn to unsafe practices such as the use of space heaters or ovens to heat their homes.

The prices consumers pay for heating oil and natural gas are a function of a global market. An individual consumer or even the Commonwealth is unable to have any significant effect upon the price of these commodities. According to the Energy Information Administration,<sup>5</sup> strong global demand and low surplus production capacity contributed to the run-up to record crude oil prices in July 2008. Contrast that with the current slowdown in global economic growth, which is due to the recent decline in oil demand and the sharp decline in prices since July 2008. As of this writing, the members of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) agreed to a 1.5 million barrels per day, or 5 percent, reduction in output in an effort to buttress now declining prices.



5 Short Term Energy Outlook. Washington, D.C. Energy Information Administration. 7 Oct. 2008.  
<<http://www.eia.doe.gov/steo>>.

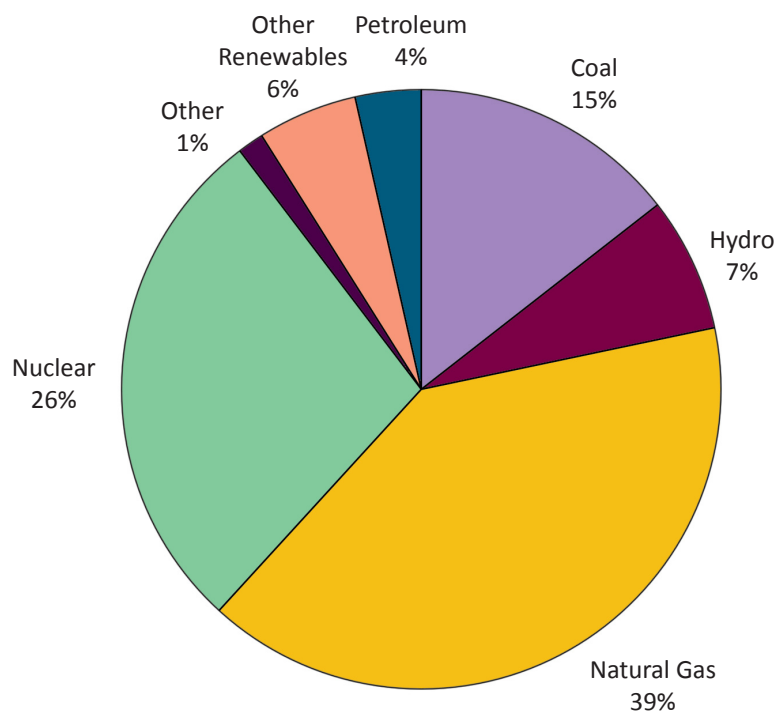
Natural gas consumption in the United States is supplied by six major sources including: onshore and offshore natural gas fields; imports by pipeline; onshore non-conventional sources such as shale gas and coal gas; production in Alaska; and imports via LNG.<sup>6</sup> Supply from onshore and offshore fields and pipelines has been declining as reserves deplete, and estimates predict that this decline will continue. To meet current levels of annual consumption, additional gas will have to come from onshore unconventional sources, Alaska, and LNG imports. Gas from each of these three sources will be more expensive than gas from the first three sources.

## ELECTRICITY

Like oil and natural gas, electricity rates have increased significantly over the past five years in Massachusetts for both residents and businesses. This increase in electricity is caused in large part because 40 percent of New England's electricity generators are fueled by natural gas. Therefore,

**2006 New England Generation by Resource**

Source: EIA state generation by resource data



6 Hornby, Rick; White, David; and Peterson, Paul. Wholesale Natural Gas Prices in New England. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 29 Aug. 2008. Synapse Energy Economics, Inc.  
<[http://www.mass.gov/Cago/docs/Community/synapse\\_report\\_aug08\\_naturalgasprices.pdf](http://www.mass.gov/Cago/docs/Community/synapse_report_aug08_naturalgasprices.pdf)>.

when the price of natural gas increases, electricity prices soon follow. Inefficiencies in the region's transmission system and increased costs associated with the delivery of electricity to homes and businesses also increase the price.

With consumers facing higher prices, state leaders, including the Attorney General's Office, are working together to provide residents with the tools they need to manage their energy more effectively. State leaders are also working to provide consumers with more options to control their energy use through increased energy efficiency and technologies such as smart meters, net metering, and clean, on-site generation such as combined heat and power systems.

In the next decade, the Commonwealth faces the need for significant improvements to its electric transmission grid. New England must invest in transmission and distribution system infrastructure to eliminate inefficiencies and ensure reliability. These improvements will cost billions of dollars and the AGO will, in its role as ratepayer advocate, work to ensure that these investments make our electric grid more reliable and more efficient while ensuring that the projects are constructed at the least cost to ratepayers.



## II. RESIDENTIAL AND MUNICIPAL PERSPECTIVES

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### PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUES

With electricity and heating costs fluctuating at alarming rates Massachusetts, residents may have difficulty paying for heat this winter. This could have a dramatic effect on public health. Already there is a greater demand for assistance than ever before. State and local service agencies are reporting record calls and requests for help in making it through the colder months. The testimony presented at the roundtables indicates that Massachusetts oil heat customers, including senior citizens on fixed incomes, may be unable to afford to fill their oil tanks this season. As of April 2008, 100,000 Massachusetts households that heat with natural gas were in arrears. They are at risk of having their gas turned off prior to the Commonwealth's shutoff moratorium for the winter heating months.<sup>7</sup>

Representatives from Community Action Programs and senior centers report an increase in individuals and families seeking assistance. Elder services representatives and local elected officials are fielding inquiries from people who have never previously asked for assistance and report that senior citizens are fearful about how they will pay for basic necessities. This increase has also been noted by local food pantries and by social service agencies throughout the state. More Massachusetts residents may be forced to choose between a warm home, adequate food, or paying for their medical prescriptions.

In order to meet this increased demand for assistance, state and local officials and human service agencies must prepare to prevent a potential health crisis. This can be accomplished largely through publicizing the existence and availability of assistance programs in the area and working together with other service agencies to encourage participation in support programs. For many Massachusetts residents, this will be the first time they rely on assistance of any sort. As such, many residents may not know where to seek help or information. It is crucial that steps be taken now to convey the necessary information to the public.

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<sup>7</sup> Wolfe, Mark. NEADA Press Release. Washington, D.C. 25 April 2008. The National Energy Assistance Directors' Association. < <http://www.neada.org/>>.

The [North Shore Elder Services](#) (NSES) is a prime example of how to disseminate public health information regarding winter heating to communities. This year, NSES was awarded funds through the Governor's new Commonwealth Corps program to develop a program in which volunteers go directly to the homes of the most vulnerable populations in the community to help them apply for assistance. A portion of this program involves training volunteers to perform outreach on benefits counseling and provide assistance with the applications for elderly residents that may have difficulty traveling to an assistance agency. Unfortunately many individuals cannot access community service offices or the Council on Aging, and sometimes they are too embarrassed to ask for help. However, through this program, these trained volunteers will be equipped with laptop computers, portable scanners, and printers so they can visit the individual at home, gather all of the necessary documents, and complete the applications with the individuals for: weatherization, fuel assistance, circuit breaker tax credits, MassHealth, or food stamps. This is just one example of steps that communities in the Commonwealth are taking to provide information about available assistance programs in order to further avoid public health consequences.

## PUBLIC SAFETY MATTERS

In addition to the public health concerns associated with increasing fuel costs, this winter heating season poses potential public safety issues as well. As more and more Massachusetts residents are faced with rising energy costs, many will be forced to make difficult choices about how to adequately and inexpensively heat their homes. Public safety professionals, including fire and police departments and emergency medical responders, are concerned about increases in both fires and carbon monoxide poisonings this winter, placing both residents and fire service personnel at greater risk for injury or death. Additionally, public health officials are warning about a potential increase in the number of illnesses and deaths from hypothermia.<sup>8</sup>

Municipalities are relying on their fire chiefs to assist in educating the public on the potential dangers associated with improper maintenance and use of home heating equipment. Heating is already the second leading cause of home fires in Massachusetts. Nationally, of the 220 fatalities associated with home heating fires last year, 85 percent were caused by alternative heating sources, such as portable space heaters, woodstoves, fireplaces, and chimneys.<sup>9</sup> In Massachusetts, there were 2,945 fires with heating equipment, resulting in two civilian deaths, four civilian injuries, and a number of firefighter injuries, totaling \$5.4 million in losses.<sup>10</sup>

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8 [Winter Weather Safety](#). Paducah, Kentucky. 13 Nov. 2008. National Weather Service. <<http://www.crh.noaa.gov/images/pah/pdf/winterweathersafety.pdf>>.

9 Hirshmugl, Joe. [No Alternative for Safety When Using Alternative Heating](#). Northbrook, Illinois. Underwriter's Laboratories. 13 Nov. 2008. <<http://www.ul.com/newsroom/heating/>>.

10 [Keep Warm, Keep Safe](#). Stow, Massachusetts. 13 Nov. 2008. Massachusetts Department of Fire Services. <[http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dfs/osfm/pubed/flyers/kwks\\_fire\\_n\\_bldg\\_training.ppt#337,22,Gas Fueled Heating Appliances](http://www.mass.gov/Eeops/docs/dfs/osfm/pubed/flyers/kwks_fire_n_bldg_training.ppt#337,22,Gas Fueled Heating Appliances)>.

Therefore, in anticipation of more individuals using alternative heating sources this winter as a result of increased energy prices, State Fire Marshal Stephen Coan is working with fire service personnel throughout the state to provide information and education to the public about fire safety concerns. As part of this effort, the [Department of Fires Services](#) (DFS) has embarked upon a statewide campaign, called [Keep Warm, Keep Safe](#), which will provide extensive public awareness as well as information and training for public safety personnel.

According to DFS, with the high cost of fuel and many residents struggling with the recent financial crisis, many may be tempted to skip the very important safety step of preventive maintenance of heating sources. Furnaces and chimneys can be a significant source of risk for household fires, and as such, they should be checked by a professional annually before the start of the heating season. DFS is working hard to spread this message and communities are encouraged to do so as well in any educational or community outreach programs developed to assist residences during this heating season.

### **SPACE HEATERS/KEROSENE HEATERS**

When used carefully, space heaters may provide a safe supplement to central heating. However, if precautions are not followed, space heaters pose significant safety risks. DFS reports that 61 space heater fires were reported to the Office of the State Fire Marshal between 2003 and 2007. These fires caused six civilian deaths, 10 civilian injuries, 14 fire service injuries, and an estimated dollar loss of \$3 million. Thirty percent of these fires were caused when combustible materials such as bedding, magazines, curtains, newspapers, or furniture were too close to the heater and ignited, and another 8 percent were caused when rugs, carpets or mats were under or too close to the heater. While these fires are not frequent, they can be deadly. DFS also states that one of every 10 space heater fires causes a fatality.

Space heaters are not designed to heat an entire home. According to Holyoke Fire Chief David LaFond, they should only be used to heat small spaces and provide supplemental heat to a room or area. Unfortunately, fire service personnel are reporting an increase in the use of space heaters to heat entire homes, particularly among the elderly. Additionally, because people using space heaters want them placed conveniently nearby, they often use extension cords to allow greater reach of the appliance. Fire service personnel warn that extension cords are dangerous and should be avoided in connection with space heaters. However, if an extension cord is necessary, it must be of the same power rating and thickness to be used safely with a space heater. Salem Fire Department Chief Richard Cody warns that the greatest risk of space heater fires is not in apartment buildings, but rather in the single-family, two-family or multi-family residential homes. Further, though unvented kerosene heaters are illegal in Massachusetts because of their dangerous fire potential, some are still utilized. Often consumers will purchase such units in neighboring states where they are sold legally. As a result, fire service personnel warn members of the community to be vigilant about such units and warn residents that these devices pose a significant risk of fire and poisoning.

The following are the DFS recommendations for the use of space heaters:

- Use only space heaters that have been approved by an OSHA-recognized laboratory (such as Underwriters Laboratory, Factory Mutual, or the Canadian Standards Association).
- Space heaters need space. Always place space heaters a minimum of three feet from any combustible material and never leave them unattended.
- Use a proper (UL-approved) extension cord rated with same amperage as the space heater.
- Follow manufacturers' guidelines and recommendations for use of space heaters.
- Comply with fire and building codes for safe installation of portable space heaters.
- Never use a space heater as your primary source of heat.

## WOOD OR PELLET STOVES

Wood and pellet stoves are sold through dealers, large and small, throughout the Commonwealth. According to Plymouth Fire Chief G. Edward Bradley, dealers often have waiting lists of people wanting to purchase these appliances for their homes as an alternative heating device. However, despite the demand for these products, according to DFS, in 2007 alone there were 880 fire incidents involving chimneys, fireplaces and woodstoves. These fires were responsible for one civilian death, three civilian injuries, 13 fire service injuries, and resulted in \$3.3 million in property losses. Combined, these incidents make up 29 percent of all fires linked to heating systems.

These products present a public safety risk not only as a result of fire, but also because these products bring with them an increased risk of poisoning or fatality caused by carbon monoxide exposure. Such side effects often result from a lack of experience when residents fail to use licensed, professional installers, and instead attempt to install an alternative heating device themselves.

As a result of the safety risks associated with these products, and the likely increased use of such products this winter, Chief Bradley recommends the following for the use of wood pellet stoves:

- Make sure the unit has been tested by an independent third party such as [Underwriter's Laboratories](#).
- Use a professional installer whenever feasible.
- Obtain permits from the local Inspectional Services Division in your community.
- Follow the manufacturers' installation and operating guidelines and recommendations for use.

The Office of the State Fire Marshal provides additional safety tips on their website section about [Heating Safely with Solid Fuels - Chimney, Wood, Coal and Pellet Stoves](#).

When installed and used properly, these devices can provide beneficial supplemental heat to a home or office. However, communities should provide the necessary education and information to their residents to make sure such devices are used properly.

### **ADDITIONAL HOME HEATING EQUIPMENT SAFETY TIPS**

Home heating systems and oil- or gas-fired appliances require regular yearly professional maintenance, servicing, cleaning, and inspection to reduce the chance of fire or carbon monoxide problems and to improve efficiency (which saves fuel and dollars).

- Chimneys should be professionally inspected and cleaned once or twice a year.
- Store hot ash outside on a flat surface, away from combustible materials, in a tightly sealed metal container (never in paper or plastic bags) and allow ash to cool completely before final disposal.
- Comply with fire and building codes for safe installation of wood stoves, fireplace inserts, and portable space heaters.
- Follow directions when using alternative heating sources (wood stoves, electric space heaters, fireplaces).
- Never use appliances as a primary heating source.
- Never store fuel in unsafe containers.
- Always open the damper of fireplaces and stoves completely.

### **SMOKE DETECTORS**

Smoke detectors are the first line of defense in the event of a fire. However, it is estimated that in Plymouth County alone, 6 percent of homes do not have working smoke detectors.<sup>11</sup> All Massachusetts homes and businesses must have working smoke detectors equipped with a battery back-up as they provide the best early warning that danger is present.<sup>12</sup> Generally, smoke detector batteries should be changed a minimum of every six months and detectors more than 10 years old should be replaced. There should be a label on the alarm with the date of manufacture. If a smoke detector does not have a label, it is already more than 10 years old and should be immediately replaced. If it is unclear how old the device is, the best course of action is to replace it with a new one.

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11 Bradley, G. Edward. Energy Roundtable. Plymouth, Massachusetts. 1 Oct. 2008.

12 M.G.L. c. 148, s. 26F. <<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/mgl/148-26f.htm>>.

Certain Massachusetts residents may be eligible for a free smoke detector (for more information, visit the [Free Smoke Alarm Distribution and Installation Programs](#) section of the DFS website). Depending on an individual's financial need, free or low-cost smoke detectors may be available through the local fire department. In addition, audible-visual smoke alarms are provided through a grant from the U.S. Fire Administration to DFS partnering with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Massachusetts Commission for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MCD&HH) to provide fire safety information to people who may be deaf or hard of hearing.

The following are recommendations for smoke detector placement:

- On every level of a home;
- In hallways outside bedrooms;
- At the top of open stairways;
- At the base of cellar stairs; and/or
- Inside the bedroom for sound sleepers or smokers.

Individuals should contact their local fire department if they would like more specific information or advice on where exactly to locate smoke detectors in the home.

The following are recommendations for smoke detector maintenance:

- Vacuum or blow out dust from the alarms once a month.
- Push the test button.
- Change batteries every six months. An easy way to remember is to change the batteries when you change your clocks. A “chirping” sound also indicates that it is time to change the batteries.
- Never paint smoke alarms.

## CARBON MONOXIDE DETECTORS

Carbon monoxide is a gas that is produced whenever any fuel, such as gas, oil kerosene, coal, wood, or charcoal is burned, and it can be deadly (view additional information about [Indoor Air Quality](#) from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency). It is estimated that there are 500 non-fire-related deaths each year from exposure to carbon monoxide; 40 percent of which resulted from consumer products such as wood stoves, gas stoves, and central heating systems. As a result of the public safety risk associated with carbon monoxide, effective 2006, all Massachusetts residences must also be equipped with carbon monoxide alarms.

In January 2005, 7-year-old Nicole Garofalo died when a heating vent in her house was blocked by snow drifts, allowing carbon monoxide to accumulate. That year, then-Governor Mitt Romney signed into law [Nicole's Law](#),<sup>13</sup> which requires carbon monoxide detectors in most buildings in Massachusetts. These buildings include: all residential buildings, hotels, motels, hospitals, nursing homes, rest homes, jails, group day care facilities, and after-school centers. The resident or owner must install carbon monoxide alarms on every level of the home or building in which there are habitable living spaces. Owners of transient residential and institutional occupancies, such as hotels, motels, hospitals, and nursing homes, must install hard-wired carbon monoxide alarms or use one of the technical options in the regulation.

According to Nicole's Law, there are several types of alarms that are allowed, including:

- Battery-powered with battery monitoring.
- Plug-in (AC-powered) units with battery backup.
- AC primary power (hard-wired usually requires an electrician) with battery back-up.
- Low-voltage or wireless alarms with secondary power.
- Qualified combination smoke detectors and CO alarms.

## COMMUNITY RESOURCES AND ASSISTANCE

Beyond the public health and public safety concerns associated with increasing fuel costs, resources are available to help Massachusetts residents stay warm. For residents who meet the income guidelines, one immediate solution to the heating crisis is the [LIHEAP](#) program. LIHEAP typically is the gateway for fuel assistance or other related programs such as those for energy efficiency, weatherization, and heating system repair or replacement.

LIHEAP was established in 1977 in order to assist low-income households with heating emergencies. The income eligibility requirements mainly relate to gross annual income and household size. In Massachusetts, the income guideline cutoff is 200 percent of the federal poverty guidelines (\$28,000 for a household of two, \$42,400 for a family of four), or 60 percent of the estimated state median income.<sup>14</sup>

Because LIHEAP is a vendor payment program, payments go to primary heat source vendors such as: oil, kerosene, propane, wood or coal, or gas or electric utility companies on behalf of families that have incurred bills. Local oil companies participate at agreed-upon discounted rates for fuel assistance customers. Both homeowners and renters are eligible for the program.

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13 Chapter 123 of the Laws of 2005. <<http://www.mass.gov/legis/laws/seslaw05/sl050123.htm>>.

14 [FY09 LIHEAP Maximum Income and Benefit Levels](#). Executive Office of Housing and Economic Development. Boston, Massachusetts. 31 Oct. 2008. <<http://www.mass.gov/Ehed/docs/dhcd/cd/liheap/chart09.pdf>>.



In addition to LIHEAP assistance, low-income natural gas and electric customers are also eligible for a discount on their utility rates. In order to qualify, customers must meet the same eligibility requirements for LIHEAP. Those eligible for the discount will receive an automatic discount off the distribution portion of their utility bill. Effective November 1, 2008, that discount will be increased, providing an additional \$30 million for low-income customers. Also available to Massachusetts ratepayers are utility company programs that forgive overdue bills and help low-income customers manage their utility expenses. The gas and electric utilities offer arrearage management plans (AMPs) that allow customers to pay arrearages over time and get credit or forgiveness for staying on the budget. These are just a few programs offered by the utility companies which can provide some assistance to individuals struggling to pay their bills.

However, a large portion of the population will not meet the income eligibility threshold necessary to qualify for these programs. In other words, the middle class residents who struggle to pay their utility bills earn too much money to benefit from these programs. For these individuals, other community resources are available to provide additional support. For example, the city of Taunton has established an Emergency Energy Task Force to assist those in the community who fall just outside of eligibility guidelines for LIHEAP. By working with the local Salvation Army and other organizations, they have the capacity to offer one-time emergency assistance support. This support typically results in enough assistance to allow for the purchase of 100 gallons of oil. The Task Force is able to provide this resource to the community because it receives about \$20,000 annually through community fundraising events. The Task Force hopes to meet the growing demand for its services by doubling fundraising efforts this year through local business contributions.<sup>15</sup> A similar program was initiated in the town of Dennis, where the town has set aside a small amount of funding for one-time emergency assistance to residents who have exhausted all other sources of fuel assistance support. Like in Taunton, this program will allow recipients to purchase about 100 gallons worth of oil.

Even though significant portions of the population may not be eligible for fuel assistance, community agencies that receive inquiries play a very important role. Since fuel assistance is often the gateway to other services necessary to ensure a residents' health and safety issues are met, these agencies can provide valuable education to those that contact their offices. At the Aging and Disability Resource Consortium of the Greater North Shore, they operate on a theory that there is no wrong door or wrong telephone number. As a result, residents can call any of the agencies in the consortium and if they initially contact the wrong agency, that operator will automatically transfer the individual to a more appropriate agency, easing the process for the individual and cutting down on additional paperwork for the agencies.

In this difficult financial climate, many municipalities are unable to provide supplemental fuel assistance to their residents. Those municipalities can serve the community in other ways, such as by functioning as a central source of information on program availability. For example, the city of North Attleborough has developed a flyer which will be distributed through the schools and their municipal light department, alerting all residents about emergency heating situations. North Attleborough has also made arrangements with several local hotels to serve as emergency

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15 Camarata, Bob. Energy Roundtable. Plymouth, Massachusetts. 1 Oct. 2008.



housing with a negotiated discounted rate. These hotels will provide emergency housing until the next business day at which point other social services could be utilized to provide assistance the individuals or families in need. The local Masonic temple has extended the use of its building in the evening hours if needed. North Attleborough has a coordinated agreement with the neighboring town of Mansfield which will be equipped to assist 30 people with emergency shelter if necessary.

Municipalities can also be proactive by conducting outreach to vulnerable populations who may not reach out for assistance. For example, the Plymouth County Sheriff's Department provides support to their elder population through a program called "Are You Okay?" The program involves a series of automated calls that are placed to elders on a daily basis. If no one answers the phone, the individual is placed on a call list and neighbors or other volunteers are sent to check on the individual. Occasionally, the local police or fire department will check on the property and the resident's well-being. In order to receive a phone call, individuals must register for the service. Plymouth Fire Chief G. Edward Bradley warns that extremely independent individuals will not participate even when they should, and family members should perhaps initiate their own phone calls for those individuals. Additionally, neighbors can play a role by ascertaining whether their elderly neighbors have picked up their newspapers and mail or whether their sidewalks are shoveled.

In Central Massachusetts, the Montachusett Opportunity Council is working with community leaders and neighborhood associations to identify volunteers to travel door-to-door with important public health and emergency services information for residents. Volunteers also participate in well-being checks on neighbors during the winter. Both the Montachusett and Plymouth programs direct local resources to education and awareness that will, in turn, likely save lives. These community outreach programs are fundamental to ensuring Massachusetts residents receive the assistance they need this winter.

Municipalities can partner with local nonprofit entities in order to provide services to the community. A prime example is the United Way 2-1-1 service, a community response system where people call 2-1-1 and speak to a live, certified call specialist who directs them to the necessary social services information. The United Way 2-1-1 service provides around-the-clock referrals to social service agencies for a variety of issues including helping consumers obtain food, health care, and heating assistance. The program was developed as a means of providing resources to local citizens while at the same time reducing the amount of non-emergency calls made to 911. Communities should promote awareness of the 2-1-1 service and its corresponding website, [www.mass211.org](http://www.mass211.org). Many municipalities advertise the 2-1-1 service on their city or town websites as a helpful resource to their citizens.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health offers a heating safety guide available in English ([Home Heating Safety](#)) and Spanish ([Seguridad en la Calefacción del Hogar](#)). Other resources for fuel assistance may include [Citizens Energy](#), the [Good Neighbor Energy Fund](#), and other private funds. Additionally, low-income customers are also eligible for special home energy efficiency and weatherization programs (funded by natural gas and electricity ratepayers), provided through gas and electric utilities.

Even in circumstances when consumers fall above income eligibility guidelines, Community Action Programs (CAPs) may be able to refer consumers to other resources. For more fuel assistance resources, including a listing of CAPs and their service areas, please view **Appendix A: AGO Energy Resource Guide**.

## III. BUSINESS PERSPECTIVES

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For businesses both large and small across the state, the fluctuating cost of fuel and energy is very much on their minds. The quandary for these businesses is how to manage increased costs and whether to pass along at least some of the higher costs through price increases. In a slowing economy, raising prices can drive away customers. Thus, the recent surge in energy prices has driven many businesses to a breaking point.

During the summer and early fall of 2007, three paper mills closed in Western Massachusetts, citing the high cost of energy as the primary reason for closing. As a result of those closures, 400 jobs were lost. In addition, earlier this year, the Newark Group announced that it was closing its facility in Haverhill. According to a UMass Boston CEO Survey, rising energy costs are cited as the second-most important impediment to doing business after health care costs in Massachusetts.

In response, businesses are implementing short- and long-term strategies for cost reduction and increased energy efficiency. Some of these strategies require no capital investment and are decidedly “low-tech,” such as the use of natural light whenever possible. Others require significant “high-tech” investment in infrastructure such as geothermal or photovoltaics. Each business throughout the state must make a careful assessment of its energy use and expenses and should determine how best to tackle its energy costs.

### STRATEGIES FOR CUTTING COSTS

Many businesses throughout the state are already thinking creatively about energy. For example, a tire and auto maintenance company on the South Shore that is currently feeling the pinch of rising energy prices elected to take steps towards utilizing more innovative and efficient methods to cut costs. As a result, the company invested in waste oil burners that take the waste oil from the oil changes and turn it into heat for their building. Another business took 25 employment positions previously based at the company headquarters and made home-based positions in an effort to cut energy usage and overhead costs.

Other businesses have thought creatively about how they can implement newer technologies that will allow them to save money on their energy usage. For example, Shields MRI, which does medical imaging and delivery of film to physicians, recently decided to invest in more electronic imaging and reporting equipment. Prior to this adjustment, Shields was spending approximately \$2 million on delivery costs. This adjustment has had a tremendous impact and they estimate they will save about \$1.4 million this year.

MassInnovation, a residential and commercial redevelopment company located in Massachusetts, recently converted the mill site formerly home to the Anwelt Shoe Factory in Fitchburg, into the site of the largest geothermal infrastructure in New England. While researching redevelopment opportunities, MassInnovation discovered that buildings are responsible for nearly a one-third to two-thirds of all energy use, mainly for heating and cooling. Both the Environmental Protection Agency<sup>16</sup> and the U.S. Department of Energy<sup>17</sup> recommend the use of geothermal as one of the most efficient means to heat and cool buildings. Geothermal heat pumps use the relatively constant temperature of the ground or water several feet below the earth's surface as source of heating, cooling, and the production of hot water. In addition to the use of geothermal technology at the site, MassInnovation received grants through the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative and the federal government, allowing the construction of the largest photovoltaic (solar electric) system on a private building in New England. In June 2008, the site was reopened as the signature MassInnovation Center, a mixed-used development which includes the North Central Charter Essential School, a number of other business and nonprofit tenants, including: Habitat for Humanity; the CAVU Foundation, a charitable healthcare and advocacy group; and the Anwelt Heritage Apartments, New England's first eco-friendly affordable senior housing development. As a result of the use of these renewable and energy efficient technologies, residents of the MassInnovation Center enjoy the benefit of lower energy costs.

Some businesses have created an energy task force, which is responsible for auditing current utility and heating expenses as well as monthly fuel costs for agency vehicles. The task force makes recommendations for the purchase of energy efficient systems and cost cutting measures. These task forces also research available loans or grants for energy efficiency upgrades to help subsidize the cost of major capital investments.

The Salem Public Schools initiated a task force to find a way to reduce the City's carbon footprint and cut energy costs. The task force identified the amount of energy the public schools were currently using. Then the task force identified those areas where it made sense from a business, economic and social perspective to reduce their costs. By undertaking this analysis, the Salem School System reduced their electricity consumption by 34 percent within the first 36 months. As a result, they advocate that every household and business in the Commonwealth undertake such an analysis to make the necessary cuts.

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16 Geothermal Energy. Washington, D.C. 28 Oct. 2008. United States Environmental Protection Agency. <<http://www.epa.gov/ebtpages/pollenergygeothermalenergy.html>>.

17 Geothermal. Washington, D.C. 24 Oct. 2008. United States Department of Energy. <<http://www.energy.gov/energysources/geothermal.htm>>.

Businesses can also take advantage of energy audits that are available through their electric or gas utility provider. The audit provides an energy assessment of the business and a report or set of recommendations, setting forth energy-saving measures that could be undertaken by the business in an effort to increase efficiency and cut costs. During the course of an energy audit, businesses can often obtain advice on installing energy-saving measures or assistance in identifying a contractor to perform the desired upgrades.

## ENERGY SAVING TIPS

Use natural light whenever possible; keep lights turned off until necessary. Shut down parking lot lights between midnight and 5:00 a.m. Replace incandescent lights with compact fluorescent bulbs (CFCs). Replacing 25 percent of lights in high use areas with CFCs can net a savings of about 50 percent of a lighting energy bill.

Purchase software to automatically shut down all computers at a designated time. Businesses that have a lot of computers are using energy efficient and green friendly fans.

Install automatic thermostats (with timers) for heating and cooling systems. Set thermostat lower in the heating season – some school systems and agencies stated they set their heat at 65 degrees. Encourage employees to wear sweaters. In the warmer seasons, open windows; use outside air as much as possible to heat and cool space. Reduce the number of hours when using heating or cooling systems (for example, turn on one hour before opening of agency or business; turn off one hour prior to closing).

Insulate duct work and hot water pipes that can leak heated or cooled air into unconditioned spaces. Insulate or replace windows. When reroofing a building, consider using R-30 insulation.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more ideas, please review the [ENERGY STAR Guidelines for Energy Management](#) to help build on the above steps and continue saving year after year. Information on the [ENERGY STAR Challenge](#), which works towards establishing a buildings' energy use and set a savings goal, is available online.

Additionally, the Massachusetts Division of Energy Resources (DOER) offers assistance for businesses through its [Commonwealth Energy Resource Teams](#).



## IV. CREATIVE IDEAS AND ALTERNATIVE SOLUTIONS

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Local municipalities and state agencies are already thinking proactively about how to provide all residents with the resources to make it safely through this winter. In the short term, this means leveraging existing resources, disseminating information about those resources and support services available, and promoting public health and safety. In the long term, this requires thinking creatively about what changes, small and large, consumers can make to cut their energy usage and thereby their costs.

In an effort to reduce their energy costs and increase their energy efficiency, Mount Wachusett Community College (MWCC) replaced the college's roof, which was in need of repair, with a white membrane reflective roof. This increased the efficiency of the photovoltaic panels the college was using as an alternative energy source, and increased the efficiency of the rooftop ventilation units by reducing the ambient temperature of the roof by 60 to 70 degrees in mid-summer. MWCC utilized \$310,000 from the Clean Renewable Energy Bond they acquired and a \$550,000 award from the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative, which administers the Renewable Energy Trust Fund, to install a 100-kilowatt photovoltaic array on the college roof. They hope to expand the installation in the future to what they anticipate would be one of the larger installations of any of the colleges in the state.

### NEW INCENTIVES - THE GREEN COMMUNITIES ACT

In order to encourage the increased implementation and use of innovative energy saving ideas, Massachusetts recently enacted the [Green Communities Act](#). The Act, passed in June 2008, places the Commonwealth on the path to the greater use of energy efficiency by supporting the development of renewable energy such as solar and wind in order to help meet the Commonwealth's energy needs. The Act also requires the exploration of new technologies such as smart meters, net

metering, and smart grid technologies, and sets aside funds for municipal government to engage in energy efficiency and renewable development. In addition, the legislation provides the AGO with some additional tools to more effectively represent consumers in utility rate proceedings. This legislation is a positive step toward providing long-term solutions to the region's energy needs.

The Green Communities Act acknowledges that consumers need more control over how and when they use electricity through new technology and financial incentives. For example, dynamic pricing programs allow customers to voluntarily shift their energy use to off-peak times at lower prices. Regulatory policies which maximize the development of on-site generation provide further incentives for use of innovative technologies. Commercial and industrial customers, as the owners of the technology, will benefit through enhanced reliability and less need to purchase electricity in the market.

The Green Communities Act is also aimed at moving the Commonwealth toward more fuel diversity and increased use of renewable generation. The law allows individuals who own wind turbines and solar-generated power to save money on their electric bills through net metering. Net metering technology allows consumers to control their electricity costs through generating their own power and receiving credit on future utility bills for excess generation sold back to the electric grid. Properly designed net metering programs and technology can provide the financial incentives for the development of on-site, clean or renewable generation.

However, with the introduction of these innovative concepts and incentives, Massachusetts must also be mindful to maintain overall system reliability. This requires an investment in transmission upgrades and new generating units to meet peak demand and to replace older, inefficient, and more expensive units. Exploring additional energy sources such as clean coal technologies and the safe and sound maximization of the region's nuclear facilities should be considered as part of the solution. Massachusetts faces complex energy challenges and as such, requires an equally complex and multifaceted set of solutions to meet those challenges. Innovative energy technologies, such as dynamic pricing, net metering and clean on-site generation, combined with increased use of demand response resources and the necessary investment in state energy infrastructure can ensure that the Commonwealth has a safe, reliable and less costly energy future.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY AND WEATHERIZATION

Reducing energy use and promoting conservation are two ways in which individuals can support efforts to develop sustainable, efficient and environmentally sound energy options in the future. State and local leaders should provide consumers with the necessary information to effectively manage their energy consumption through energy efficiency and weatherization. Local communities must continue to encourage every household, business and municipality in the state to do what they can to reduce their energy use. Every community should consider creating an energy committee and/or utilizing an energy coordinator to assess what can be done in this area.

There are several cost-effective measures that residents can employ that will help save significant amounts of energy, which will, in turn, result in lower energy bills. Local electric or gas utility companies offer free residential energy audits. These audits are paid for by ratepayers through



an assessment on their monthly energy bill. Audits are useful and can provide important recommendations that will have short- and long-term effects on savings and cost.

Homeowners can also conduct energy audits themselves. The investment of a few hours can pay big dividends in energy savings. Drafts can be a major source of lost heat. Experts indicate that reducing drafts in a home result in savings of between 5 and 30 percent per year.<sup>18</sup> Experts advise checking for indoor air leaks and drafts throughout the home, such as gaps along the baseboard or edge of the flooring and at the corners of the walls and ceiling. In addition, homeowners can check to see if air can flow through these places:

- Electrical outlets;
- Switch plates;
- Window frames;
- Baseboards;
- Weather stripping around doors;
- Fireplaces and attics;
- Wall or window mounted air conditioners;
- Home insulation; and
- Basements and attics for leaks near electrical wires pipes and windows.

Homeowners should also annually inspect their heating and cooling equipment, and heating and cooling filters should be replaced once a year. These are all easy ways consumers can save energy and money.

Similarly, though every home needs proper ventilation, cracks or openings in the house may allow too much cold air in the winter and too much moisture in the summer causing mold and mildew to develop, leading to poor air quality and potential medical issues. The following are a few tips that may be helpful in alleviating this problem:

- Insulate rooms and replace old windows.
- Use caulking and weather-stripping on all doors and windows.
- Insulate the first six feet of hot and cold water pipes that are connected to the water heater.

For more information on weatherization and insulation see the [Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources](#) fact sheet on insulation.

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18 [Home Energy Saver](#). Berkeley, California. 13 Nov. 2008. United States Department of Energy: Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory. <<http://hes.lbl.gov/>>.

## OTHER WEATHERIZATION TIPS

Use locks on windows and doors to make them tighter and draft resistant, and close curtains and shades at night to keep the home warmer.

Carpet or roll out more rugs on floors in the winter to prevent heat loss and keep rooms warmer. If possible, replace lighter (material) curtains with heavy curtains to prevent air from leaking in.

Remove air conditioners from windows and cover in-wall air conditioners to prevent cold air from seeping through.

Seal any fireplaces not in use. Close doors of rooms not in use. Close vents in rooms not in use.

As part of long-term planning, homeowners should consider an investment in energy efficient windows, heating systems, or appliances where such an investment will make economic sense. Although there is an initial “front end” cost, replacing older systems can pay off by reducing energy bills and reducing the amount of pollutants released into the environment. Consumers should take care to fully understand how long it will take to recover the costs through future savings to determine if a major energy efficiency investment makes financial sense.

## LIGHTING/ELECTRICITY USE

Experts agree that energy for lighting accounts for about 10 percent of the average electric bill. There are a few ways consumers can cut their electricity usage and costs, including:

- Look at the wattage of all of the light bulbs at home and consider switching to lower-wattage bulbs.
- Replace standard incandescent bulbs with [compact fluorescent lamps](#) (CFLs) for areas where lights are on for extended periods of time. CFLs use 75 percent less energy, last up to 10 times longer, produce the same amount of light, and do not get as hot as traditional light bulbs.<sup>19</sup>
- Use motion detectors or timers for lights outdoors or other areas where there is less activity.
- Contact your electric utility to see if they offer rebates for the purchase of energy-saving lights in bulk.

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19 [ENERGY STAR @ home tips](#). Washington, D.C. 24 Oct. 2008. United States Environmental Protection Agency: Energy Star. <[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.es\\_at\\_home\\_tips](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=products.es_at_home_tips)>.

- Use Light Emitting Diodes (LEDs) instead of bulbs for holiday lighting. LEDs use 90 percent less energy, are more durable and can last years longer. (For other holiday lighting tips, visit the [Holiday Lighting Energy Use Comparison](#) section of the NSTAR website.)<sup>20</sup>
- Turn off computers and other home electronics.
- Clean out electric dryer filters often to use less energy for drying clothes.
- Wash clothes in cold water rather than hot water.
- Approximately 20 percent of energy is still being used even if the appliance is not on. Unplug small appliances – including televisions, DVD players, phone chargers, and kitchen appliances when they are not in use. Consider switching off the appliances using a surge protector power strip at the end of the day, which is easier and has the added benefit of protecting the appliance as well.

## HEATING AND OTHER IDEAS FOR SAVING ENERGY

Install programmable thermostats which can lower heat at set times when the home is not occupied. Lower the heat to 55 degrees if you will be away for a day or longer. Keep heating temperature at a steady rate (65 degrees) throughout the winter and wear layers if temperatures get colder. A steady temperature also prevents water pipes from bursting.

Use wood-burning stoves and other solid fuel-burning heating appliances; however, be sure to follow the [regulations for safe use](#).

Make sure heating vents are not blocked by appliances, electronics, or furniture. Repair water leaks in pipes in the basement and throughout the home.

During warmer months, use an attic fan to draw hot air out of the attic, and use a whole-house fan to draw fresh air in through windows and exhaust through roof vents.

Hang laundry outside to dry. Run washers, dryers and dishwashers only with a full load and during the early morning or late evening. Many dishwashers have a delay start feature, which will allow it to run overnight. Let dishes air-dry once they are clean instead of machine drying.

Take a shower instead of a bath to use less water and to lower the energy use to heating the water. Lower the amount of water usage by installing water-saving fixtures in your home (i.e., on faucets and shower-heads). Lower the temperature of water heating system to below 120 degrees.

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20 [Holiday Lighting Energy Use Comparison](#). Woburn, Massachusetts. 13 Nov. 2008. NSTAR. <[http://www.nstaronline.com/residential/energy\\_efficiency/holiday-lights.asp](http://www.nstaronline.com/residential/energy_efficiency/holiday-lights.asp)>.

## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

For more information on energy audits and other conservation and efficiency tips, visit [www.MassSAVE.com](http://www.MassSAVE.com). MassSAVE is a public/private partnership created to assist Massachusetts customers in managing their energy use through efficiency and conservation. The website is a statewide clearinghouse for all programs offered to Massachusetts utility customers, including the scheduling of energy audits through your local utility.

For more information on special offers and rebates available on energy efficient products, please visit the [ENERGY STAR](#) website, or view the Efficient Windows Collaborative [Fact Sheet: Selecting Energy Efficient Windows in Massachusetts](#).

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVING THE ENERGY LANDSCAPE IN MASSACHUSETTS

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Based on the testimony presented at the Winter Heating and Energy Roundtables, the Massachusetts Attorney General makes the following recommendations.

### **I. THE ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE WILL FACILITATE COORDINATION BETWEEN MUNICIPALITIES AND OTHER ENERGY EXPERTS AND STAKEHOLDERS TO PROVIDE EDUCATION AND RESOURCES TO THOSE INTERESTED.**

Municipalities have a history of working successfully with nonprofit organizations in order to provide energy resources to their citizens. The Attorney General's Office will work toward promoting already existing municipal/stakeholder programs such as the United Way 2-1-1 service and the Plymouth County Sheriff's Department's "Are You Okay?" program. Communities should create additional partnerships with nonprofit agencies throughout the state as a means of providing education and resource information to their residents. The AGO recommends that anyone in a community-service capacity that comes into contact with a resident who might need help be prepared to advise them of the existence of available energy resources, particularly the [Community Action Programs](#) in their community. Likewise, fraternal and service organizations, local municipalities, faith communities, businesses, and schools should consider partnering with their respective community action program and fundraising for emergency fuel and food funds as well as for coats, blankets and other warming supplies this winter. Local and statewide agencies and organizations should continue to promote awareness of available support resources through outreach events or information tables at high-traffic areas such as supermarkets, restaurants and other locations.

**2. EACH FALL, THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WILL HOST AN ANNUAL WINTER HEATING AND ENERGY ROUNDTABLE EVENT SO THAT COMMUNITIES CAN COME TOGETHER ON A YEARLY BASIS TO DISCUSS THEIR CONCERNS AND POTENTIAL SOLUTIONS TO WINTER HEATING AND ENERGY ISSUES.**

The 2008 Winter Heating and Energy Roundtable series brought together municipal officials, community leaders, and local resource agencies to share ideas and discuss the financial, public safety, and public health implications of rising energy costs that Massachusetts residents are facing for the coming winter. These concerns are not unique to this winter, and will continue to occur each year as we enter into the winter heating season. Moreover, innovative ideas about energy matters are developing at a rapid pace and should be continually examined. The Attorney General's Office will host an annual fall roundtable event in coordination with local municipalities to discuss regularly the implications of rising energy costs and winter heating concerns. Municipalities and businesses will continue to develop creative and innovative best practices for how they are preparing for each winter, and the Attorney General will provide an annual forum for the discussion of those ideas and alternatives.

**3. CONTINUE TO ADVOCATE FOR GREATER ALLOCATION OF FEDERAL AND STATE RESOURCES TO ASSIST RESIDENTIAL, MUNICIPAL AND COMMERCIAL CONSUMERS IN MEETING THEIR WINTER HEATING COSTS. THIS EFFORT SHOULD INCLUDE WORKING FOR INCREASED LIHEAP FUNDING FOR MASSACHUSETTS RESIDENTS.**

Each winter Massachusetts residents will face a serious crisis where families will not be able to afford to heat their homes. In an environment of continuing price volatility, it is a particular burden to low-income households. As community groups working with low-income residents already know, this is an ongoing crisis in Massachusetts that brings with it serious public health and safety implications. The Attorney General has been an advocate for the increase of federal and state resources to assist Massachusetts consumers in meeting their winter heating and energy costs.

Earlier this fall, the Attorney General, along with seven other Attorneys General in the northeast region, called upon Congress to pass legislation providing immediate additional funds for this winter for LIHEAP. This fall the Attorney General's Office hosted the New England Ratepayer Energy Summit, bringing together energy customers, their advocates, and government officials from throughout the region to discuss the impact of, and how to combat, high energy costs in New England. State officials should continue to fight for increased funding for LIHEAP and other state and local administered programs and the AGO will continue to advocate for this much-needed assistance.

**4. EXPLORE DEVELOPING A MASSACHUSETTS OIL HEAT EFFICIENCY FUND TO PROVIDE LOW-INTEREST LOANS AND GRANTS TO HOMEOWNERS FOR ENERGY EFFICIENT UPGRADES TO THEIR OIL HEAT EQUIPMENT.**

A major way to reduce energy costs is by reducing energy used for home heating. Replacing older heating systems with new, energy-efficient equipment is one way homeowners lower their energy expenses and promote a cleaner environment. Currently, Massachusetts electric and natural gas utility companies administer efficiency programs for residential and commercial customers. These programs promote energy efficiency upgrades and are funded through the “efficiency charge” on ratepayers’ utility bills. Unfortunately, no such efficiency program exists for Massachusetts customers who heat with oil.

As a result, the Attorney General’s Office supports the creation of a Massachusetts Oil Heat Efficiency Fund. State leaders should think creatively about how to provide funding through low-interest loans and grants to help Massachusetts homeowners upgrade older, inefficient oil-fired heating systems with newer, more efficient equipment. For those who heat their homes with oil, heating costs can be significantly decreased through improving the energy efficiency of their heating equipment. Since these upgrades can be costly, an oil heat efficiency fund would offset some of the upfront costs associated with the replacement of these systems. Even though funding is limited in this current financial climate, creation of an oil heat efficiency fund would provide vital financial assistance for oil heat customers to become more efficient and therefore cut their energy costs. As such, the Attorney General’s Office will work to assist the Commonwealth in finding creative solutions for funding such a program.

**5. THE AGO WILL ASSIST COMMUNITIES WITH TARGETING INFORMATION AND RESOURCES TO VULNERABLE POPULATIONS THAT OFTEN HAVE A MORE DIFFICULT TIME ACCESSING INFORMATION.**

When there is a winter heating crisis, there are particularly vulnerable populations who require additional attention and outreach. Elders, residents of manufactured housing, and residents with limited English proficiency often need additional resources. As a result, communities must think creatively about what strategies they can implement in order to reach out to those who may be struggling financially to inform them of the programs which maybe able to help. This may include outreach programs via flyers, community access television, senior centers, faith communities, community health centers, and neighbor-to-neighbor visits. Many residents may be non-English proficient and have trouble filling out application forms. In most communities, the local Community Action Program may be able to help residents overcome this obstacle. Municipalities must continue to think creatively about how to better reach out to these individuals particularly in anticipation of the winter heating season.

The AGO will utilize multiple media, including Web-based technology, to support and encourage this communication across the Commonwealth, sharing best practices and methodology for reaching vulnerable populations. One of its first activities was the launch, in early November 2008, of the [AGO Energy Blog](#), which provides a forum for municipal and state government, Community Action Programs, experts in energy issues, and social service agencies to exchange ideas and solutions to the issue of reaching the Commonwealth's most vulnerable.

#### **6. THE AGO WILL WORK WITH OTHER STATE AND LOCAL LEADERS TO ANALYZE THE ENERGY IMPACTS OF NEW PROGRAMS, REGULATIONS AND LEGISLATION.**

State and local governments have little control over the rising price of energy as the commodity markets generally dictate cost. Governments do, however, have control over programs, policy, legislation, and regulations. Occasionally, such initiatives have an ancillary effect on energy prices. Particularly given the current financial crisis, state and local governments should be mindful of the effect new initiatives may have on energy use and/or prices. Prior to implementing new programs, governments should conduct an analysis of the proposal and carefully weigh the impact on energy costs.



## VI. CONCLUSION

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As energy costs remain a significant portion of the individual, family and commercial budget, more Massachusetts families and businesses continue to struggle with those rising costs. State and local officials and other community stakeholders must come together to tackle the potential problems that are presented during the winter heating season. Indeed, there will be a pressing need for assistance to provide residential and commercial consumers with the resources they need to stay warm.

Fire officials anticipate more fires than in past years because people are likely to use increased unsafe ways to heat their homes. The health care community is likely to witness the effects that come from the lack of adequate heating because, among other health issues, residents may choose to heat their homes rather than pay for their medications. Schools may experience an increase in students staying after school to stay warm as opposed to going to an unheated home, and senior centers will experience an increase in visitors. These are important concerns that require an immediate response.

In order to help formulate that response, the Attorney General hosted these municipal energy roundtable events throughout the state to bring together municipal officials, community leaders, and local resource agencies to share ideas and discuss the financial, public safety, and public health implications of rising energy costs that we are all facing this winter. The culmination of these events was this report, which provides information about available resources, examples of energy saving methods utilized by residential consumers, municipalities and businesses throughout the state, and recommendations on what additional steps the Attorney General's Office should take, as well as other state and local entities, in order to address this problem.

While this report wraps up this year's Roundtables, the work in helping Massachusetts consumers and businesses address the financial burden of energy costs continues. The AGO is committed to working at the federal, state and local level to support ratepayers.



# APPENDIX A: AGO ENERGY RESOURCE GUIDE

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In preparation for the Winter Heating and Energy Roundtables, the AGO collected a listing of resources which are available to help Massachusetts residents find fuel assistance, weatherization information, and energy conservation tips.

This list, the “Energy Resource Guide,” will be updated regularly on the [Attorney General’s website](#). The Guide was last updated October 24, 2008.



# ENERGY RESOURCE GUIDE

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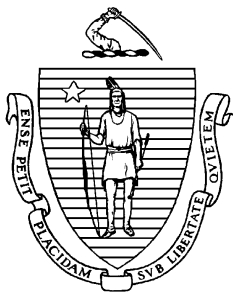
Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Office of the Attorney General

**MARTHA COAKLEY**  
Attorney General

October 2008

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MARTHA COAKLEY  
ATTORNEY GENERAL

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS  
OFFICE OF THE ATTORNEY GENERAL  
ONE ASHBURTON PLACE  
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02108

(617) 727-2200  
(617) 727-4765 TTY  
[www.mass.gov/ago](http://www.mass.gov/ago)

Thank you for taking part in the Winter Heating and Energy Roundtable series, hosted by our office in partnership with various municipalities across the Commonwealth.

As you know, the cost of heating a home with oil this winter is predicted to rise as much as 42 percent from last year, and the cost of heating with natural gas is expected to increase by about 32 percent. When such rising costs are coupled with an anticipated six percent hike in electricity costs, the Commonwealth is facing a far-reaching energy crisis. Indeed, some Massachusetts residents may be forced to choose between heating their homes and buying food, medication or other necessities.

In Massachusetts, the Attorney General's Office serves as the consumer advocate in state and federal regulatory proceedings involving natural gas and electric rates. In addition, our office must ensure that consumers are not subject to anticompetitive practices in the delivery and sale of petroleum products. Consumers should know that we are vigorously representing them to keep prices as low as possible, but much of the increase in price is related to the higher cost of natural gas, which, like oil, is set through world supply and demand.

With consumers facing higher prices, we need to provide them with the tools to manage their energy use wisely. As prices are likely to remain high, we must provide consumers with more options to control their use through increased energy efficiency and technology, such as smart meters, and clean, on-site generation, such as combined heat and power systems. In addition, we must ensure that low-income residents are made aware of resources which can help them pay for some of their heating expenses.

These Winter Heating and Energy Roundtables will provide a forum for sharing ideas and discussing the financial, public safety, and public health implications of rising energy costs, as well as the opportunities and best practices to help consumers manage the upcoming heating season. We will also discuss ways in which municipalities are implementing short- and long-term strategies for cost reduction and increased energy efficiency. It is important that we plan now for this potential impending consumer and health crisis before thermometers dip to the freezing mark.

In preparation for these roundtables, we have collected the attached listing of statewide resources, which are available to help your constituents find fuel assistance, weatherization information, and energy conservation tips.

We realize that this list is only the beginning. We plan to regularly update this information on our website, [www.mass.gov/ago](http://www.mass.gov/ago), and invite you to share with us any resources which you think may be helpful to Massachusetts residents and businesses. For more information, or to provide a resource, please call Dominique Williams at (617) 963-2069 or email [Domonique.Williams@state.ma.us](mailto:Domonique.Williams@state.ma.us).

Cordially,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Martha Coakley".

Martha Coakley  
Massachusetts Attorney General



### **Office of Attorney General Martha Coakley**

One Ashburton Place  
Boston, MA 02108  
Phone: (617) 727-2200  
TTY: (617) 727-4765  
[www.mass.gov/ago](http://www.mass.gov/ago)

Boston Office  
100 Cambridge Street  
Boston, MA 02108  
Phone: (617) 727-2200

New Bedford Office  
105 William Street, First Floor  
New Bedford, MA 02740  
Phone: (508) 990-9700

Springfield Office  
1350 Main Street, Fourth Floor  
Springfield, MA 01103  
Phone: (413) 784-1240

Worcester Office  
One Exchange Place  
Worcester, MA 01608  
Phone: (508) 792-7600

### **Public Inquiry & Assistance Center Hotline**

(617) 727-8400

The Attorney General's Public Inquiry & Assistance Center Hotline answers thousands of calls each year from consumers with a range of questions and concerns in the area of consumer protection. The Hotline is staffed weekdays from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. with trained information specialists who can:

- Answer questions or direct consumers to areas of this website for answers;
- Offer referrals to appropriate organizations or government agencies for help; or
- Provide information on the Attorney General's consumer complaint and mediation processes, and community-based consumer and mediation programs.



## COMMUNITY ACTION PROGRAMS

### **Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP)**

105 Chauncy Street, 3rd Floor

Boston, MA 02111

(617) 357-6086

[www.masscap.org](http://www.masscap.org)

The Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP) is a statewide association of the 24 Community Action Agencies (CAAs) operating in Massachusetts.

Community Action Agencies or CAPs (also known as Community Action Agencies) are private, nonprofit human service and advocacy organizations that were established by an act of Congress in the 1960s. Throughout the nation, these community based agencies are helping low-income people to move beyond their circumstances toward greater participation in the economy at large. The programs below (listed alphabetically) may provide fuel assistance, heating emergency assistance repairs/replacements, and/or weatherization services for low-income households.

### **Action for Boston Community Development, Inc. (ABCD)**

178 Tremont Street

Boston, MA 02111

(617) 357-6000

<http://www.bostonabcd.org/programs/crisis/fuel-assistance/>

Service Area: Boston, Brookline, and Newton

### **Action, Inc.**

24 Elm Street

Gloucester, MA 01930

(978) 283-7874

<http://actioninc.org/energy.html>

Service Area: Essex, Gloucester, Hamilton, Ipswich, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Rockport, Wenham

### **Berkshire Community Action Council, Inc. (BCAC)**

1531 East Street

Pittsfield, MA 01201

(413) 445-4503

Service Area: Adams, Alford, Becket, Cheshire, Clarksburg, Dalton, Egremont, Florida, Great Barrington, Hancock, Hinsdale, Lanesborough, Lee, Lenox, Monterey, Mount Washington, New Ashford, New Marlborough, North Adams, Otis, Peru, Pittsfield, Richmond, Sandisfield, Savoy, Sheffield, Stockbridge, Tyringham, Washington, West Stockbridge, Williamstown, and Windsor

**City of Cambridge, Department of Human Services**

51 Inman Street

Cambridge, MA 02139

(617) 349-6252

<http://www.cambridgema.gov/DHSP2/fuelassistance.cfm>

Service Area: Cambridge, Somerville

**Citizens for Citizens, Inc. (CFC)**

264 Griffin Street

Fall River, MA 02724

(508) 679-0041

<http://cfcinc.org/programs/energy-programs/fuel-assistance/>

Service Area: Berkeley, Dighton, Fall River, Freetown, Lakeville, Rehoboth, Seekonk, Somerset, Swansea, Taunton, and Westport.

**Community Action, Inc. (CAI)**

145 Essex Street

Haverhill, MA 01832

(978) 373-1971

<http://www.communityactioninc.org/heatassist.htm>

Service Area: Amesbury, Boxford, Georgetown, Groveland, Haverhill, Merrimac, Newbury, Newburyport, Rowley, Salisbury, West Newbury

**Community Action! of the Franklin, Hampshire, and North Quabbin Regions**

393 Main Street

Greenfield, MA 01301

(413) 774-2310 Franklin County

1-800-370-2310 Hampshire County

[energyprog@communityaction.us](mailto:energyprog@communityaction.us)

<http://www.communityaction.us/index.php?id=392>

Service Area: Amherst, Ashfield, Belchertown, Bernardston, Buckland, Charlemont, Chesterfield, Colrain, Conway, Cummington, Deerfield, Easthampton, Erving, Gill, Goshen, Granby, Granville, Greenfield, Hadley, Hatfield, Hawley, Heath, Huntington, Levrett, Leyden, Middlefield, Monroe, Montague, New Salem, Northampton, Northfield, Orange, Pelham, Plainfield, Rowe, Shelburne, Shutesbury, South Hadley, Southampton, Sunderland, Ware, Warwick, Wendell, Westhampton, Williamsburg, Worthington, and Whatley

**Community Action Program Inter-City, Inc. (CAPIC)**

100 Everett Avenue, #14

Chelsea, MA 02150

(617) 884-6130

<http://www.capicinc.org/Fuel%20Assistance.html>

Service Area: Chelsea, Revere, and Winthrop.

**Community Teamwork, Inc. (CTI)**

167 Dutton Street

Lowell, MA 01852

(978) 459-0551

(978) 459-6161 Fuel Assistance Office

<http://www.comteam.org/fuel.htm>

Service Area: Arlington, Bedford, Belmont, Billerica, Burlington, Carlisle, Chelmsford, Dracut, Dunstable, Groton, Lexington, Lowell, Pepperell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, Waltham, Watertown, Westford and Wilmington.

Housing service area: Merrimack Valley, plus Cape Ann and the North Shore for certain services.

**Greater Lawrence Community Action Council, Inc. (GLCAC)**

305 Essex Street

Lawrence, MA 01840

(978) 681-4900

[http://www.glcac.org/Program\\_files/Fuel\\_Assistance.htm](http://www.glcac.org/Program_files/Fuel_Assistance.htm)

Service Area: Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, North Andover, North Reading, and Reading.

**Lynn Economic Opportunity, Inc. (LEO)**

156 Broad Street

Lynn, MA 01901

(781) 581-7220

[www.leoinc.org](http://www.leoinc.org)

Service Area: Lynn, Lynnfield, Nahant, Saugus, Swampscott, and Wakefield.

**Montachusett Opportunity Council, Inc. (MOC)**

133 Prichard St.

Fitchburg, MA 01420

(978) 342-7013

<http://www.mocinc.org/energy.htm#heating>

Service Area: Ashburnham, Athol, Berlin, Bolton, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner, Lancaster, Leominster, Phillipston, Royalston, Sterling, Templeton, Westminster, and Winchendon.

**New England Farm Workers' Council, Inc. (NEFWC)**

1666 Main Street

Springfield, MA 01103

(413) 272-2209

[http://www.partnersforcommunity.org/new\\_england\\_farm\\_workers.htm](http://www.partnersforcommunity.org/new_england_farm_workers.htm)

Western Service Area: Springfield

**New England Farm Workers' Council, Inc. (NEFWC)**

473 Main St., Floor 3

Fitchburg, MA 01420-8008

(978) 342-4520

[http://www.partnersforcommunity.org/new\\_england\\_farm\\_workers.htm](http://www.partnersforcommunity.org/new_england_farm_workers.htm)

North Central Service Area: Ashburnham, Ashby, Athol, Ayer, Barre, Berlin, Bolton, Clinton, Fitchburg, Gardner, Hardwick, Harvard, Hubbardston, Lancaster, Leominster, Lunenburg, New Braintree, Petersham, Phillipston, Princeton, Royalston, Shirley, Sterling, Templeton, Townsend, Westminster, and Winchendon.

**North Shore Community Action Program, Inc. (NSCAP)**

98 Main Street

Peabody, MA 01960

(978) 531-0767

<http://www.northshorecap.org/fuel.html>

Service Area: Beverly, Danvers, Marblehead, Middleton, Peabody, Salem, and Topsfield.

**People Acting in Community Endeavors, Inc. (PACE)**

166 William Street

PO Box 5626

New Bedford, MA 02742

(508) 999-9920

<http://www.paceinfo.org/programs.htm>

Service Area: Acushnet, Dartmouth, Fairhaven, Marion, Mattapoisett, New Bedford, and Rochester.

**Quincy Community Action Programs, Inc. (QCAP)**

1509 Hancock Street

Quincy, MA 02169

(617) 479-8181

[www.qcap.org](http://www.qcap.org)

Service Area: Braintree, Milton, Quincy, and Weymouth

**Self-Help, Inc.**

780 West Main Street

Avon, MA 02322

(508) 588-5440 Brockton residents

(508) 226-4192 Attleboro residents

<http://www.selfhelpinc.org/FuelProg.html>

Service Area: Abington, Attleboro, Avon, Bridgewater, Brockton, Canton, Dedham, East Bridgewater, Easton, Foxborough, Hanson, Holbrook, Mansfield, Norfolk, North Attleboro, Needham, Norton, Norwood, Plainville, Randolph, Raynham, Rockland, Sharon, Stoughton, Walpole, West Bridgewater, Westwood, Whitman and Wrentham.

**South Middlesex Opportunity Council, Inc. (SMOC)**

300 Howard Street

Framingham, MA 01701

(508) 620-2300

<http://www.smoc.org/index.asp?pgid=27>

Service Area: Acton, Ashland, Blackstone, Bellingham, Boxborough, Concord, Dover, Framingham, Grafton, Holliston, Hopedale, Hopkinton, Hudson, Lincoln, Littleton, Marlborough, Maynard, Medfield, Medway, Mendon, Milford, Millis, Millville, Natick, Northborough, Northbridge, Sherborn, Shrewsbury, Southborough, Stow, Sudbury, Wayland, Wellesley, Westborough, Weston, Upton, and Uxbridge.

**South Shore Community Action Council, Inc. (SSCAC)**

265 South Meadow Road

Plymouth, MA 02360

(508) 747-7575

[http://www.sscac.org/fuel\\_assist.htm](http://www.sscac.org/fuel_assist.htm)

Service Area: Carver, Duxbury, Hanover, Hull, Kingston, Marshfield, Norwell, Pembroke, Plymouth, Plympton, and Scituate.

**Springfield Partners for Community Action, Inc. (Springfield Partners)**

619 State Street

Springfield, MA 01109

(413) 263-6500

<http://www.springfieldpartnersinc.com/user-cgi/pages.cgi?dbkey=219&level=2&category=programs>

Service Area: Springfield.

**Tri-City Community Action Program, Inc. (Tri-CAP)**

110 Pleasant Street

Malden, MA 02148

(781) 322-4125

<http://www.tri-cap.org/Trienrgy.htm>

Service Area: Everett, Malden, and Medford.

**Valley Opportunity Council, Inc. (VOC)**

300 High Street

Holyoke, MA 01040

(413) 552-1554

(413) 552-1548

<http://www.valleyopp.com/energy.html>

Service Area: Agawam, Blandford, Brimfield, Chester, Chicopee, East Longmeadow, Granville, Hampden, Holland, Holyoke, Longmeadow, Ludlow, Monson, Montgomery, Palmer, Russell, Southwick, Tolland, Wales, West Springfield, Westfield, and Wilbraham.

**Worcester Community Action Council, Inc. (WCAC)**

484 Main Street, 2nd Floor

Worcester, MA 01608

(508) 754-1176

<http://www.wcac.net/fuel.html>

Service Area: Worcester, Auburn, Boylston, Brookfield, Charlton, Douglas, Dudley, East Brookfield, Hardwick, Holden, Leicester, Millbury, New Braintree, North Brookfield, Oakham, Oxford, Paxton, Rutland, Shrewsbury, Southbridge, Spencer, Sturbridge, Sutton, Warren, Webster, West Boylston, West Brookfield, and Westborough.

## STATEWIDE HEATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

### **Citizens Energy / Distrigas Heat Assistance Program**

[www.citizensenergy.com](http://www.citizensenergy.com)

1-866-GAS-9918

The Citizens Energy / Distrigas Heat Assistance Program (CEDHAP) provides a \$150 utility bill credit to eligible households who heat with natural gas. The program is open to low-income families that have exhausted their federal fuel assistance benefit, or to individuals who are ineligible to receive federal fuel assistance but cannot afford to pay their heating bills.

### **Citizens Energy Oil Heat Program**

[www.citizensenergy.com](http://www.citizensenergy.com)

1-877-563-4645

The Citizens Oil Heat Program provides eligible people with discount heating oil. Eligibility is considered at the 200 percent Federal Poverty Income Guidelines or \$41,300 family of four. Last year the Oil Heat Program provided eligible families a one-time delivery of 100 gallons of home heating oil.

### **Energy Bucks**

[www.energybucks.com](http://www.energybucks.com)

1-866-LESS COST

Energy Bucks is an initiative created by The Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP), Low-Income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN), and group of the state's electric and gas utility companies and energy efficiency organizations. The initiative was created to promote the programs such as: fuel assistance, discount utility rates, and energy efficiency and weatherization services.

### **Good Neighbor Energy Fund**

[www.magoodneighbor.org](http://www.magoodneighbor.org)

1-800-334-3047 (serving area codes 508, 617, 781 and 978)

1-800-262-1320 (serving area code 413)

The Good Neighbor Energy Fund provides energy assistance to hundreds-of-thousands of residents in temporary crisis who are struggling to pay their energy bills and do not qualify for federal or state energy funds. Income for either the prior 12 months or the past month (times 12 months for a total annual figure) must be within 200 to 275 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guidelines.

**KeySpan Energy Delivery OnTrack**

[www.keysenergy.com/customer/saving](http://www.keysenergy.com/customer/saving)

1-800-503-5172

On Track works with 350 low-income single- and two-family heating customers who are receiving public assistance, to help them resolve financial difficulties. Each participant receives a financial and energy home study kit that includes audio tapes and work books and individualized customer services tools like: household financial analysis, how to develop an affordable payment plan for past due and future bills, information referrals to financial assistance programs, assistance with applications for government and non-profit benefits and support groups. Many customers also become eligible for bill forgiveness of up to \$400.

**LIHEAP Cold Relief Heatline**

[www.mass.gov/dhcd](http://www.mass.gov/dhcd)

1-800-632-8175

Funded through the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) assists low-income individuals and families with the cost of heating their homes during the winter season. The program is managed by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) in conjunction with 22 regional nonprofit and local government organizations. This year, LIHEAP will provide fuel assistance to low-income people with annual incomes up to 200 percent of the federal poverty level, or \$42,400 for a family of four. Current benefits vary depending on income levels.

**Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development HEARTWAP**

[http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eheadterminal&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Community+Development&L2=Housing+Energy+Programs&sid=Ehead&b=terminalcontent&f=dhcd\\_cd\\_hwap\\_hwap&csid=Ehead](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eheadterminal&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Community+Development&L2=Housing+Energy+Programs&sid=Ehead&b=terminalcontent&f=dhcd_cd_hwap_hwap&csid=Ehead)

(617) 573-1400

1-800-632-8175 toll-free

Heating Emergency Assistance Retrofit Task Weatherization Assistance Program (HEARTWAP) provides heating system repair and replacement services to low-income households. The program is administered by a network of local agencies, in most areas the same agency that administers LIHEAP program. HEARTWAP contracts with heating system service companies to complete the work for eligible households. Households that are eligible for LIHEAP, up to 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level are eligible for HEARTWAP services. The program is designed primarily to serve homeowners.

**MassSAVE**

[www.masssave.com](http://www.masssave.com)

1-866-527-7283

MassSAVE is funded through local electric and gas utilities and energy efficiency service providers. Program services include: educational materials/services; in-home services for customers who plan to invest in energy saving improvements; step-by-step guidance through the installation of energy-saving measures and incentives; quality installations performed by fully licensed and insured contractors who warrant all workmanship and materials for one year; and inspections.



## **New England Farm Workers' Council (NEFWC) Fuel Assistance Program**

[http://www.partnersforcommunity.org/new\\_england\\_farm\\_workers.htm](http://www.partnersforcommunity.org/new_england_farm_workers.htm)

(413) 272 - 2209

Also known as NEFWC's Fuel Assistance Program, LIHEAP pays benefits of fixed amounts based on household income. An additional benefit is available to households having a high energy burden. NEFWC and other administering agencies determine household eligibility based on annualized income and number of household members. The agency makes utility payments to the primary heating vendor -- oil, gas, electric or other. Special provisions are made for those households whose heat is included in their rent and for those living in subsidized housing. All eligible households receive discounts of up to 35 percent on utility and telephone service.

## **Residential Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT) Program**

[www.masshousinginfo.org/agencies](http://www.masshousinginfo.org/agencies)

1-800-224-5124 to find the local housing agency

RAFT is a state-funded homelessness prevention program. RAFT helps families who are behind on rent, mortgage payments, or utility bills. RAFT also helps families who have to move but do not have enough money to pay a security deposit, utility startup costs, or first/last month's rent. Families can get up to \$3000. Funding is limited. Not all eligible families get help. The Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development oversees the RAFT program. On the local level, RAFT is run by regional nonprofit housing agencies.

## DISCOUNTED UTILITY RATES

Utility discounts are lower rates charged to low-income customers for gas, electricity, and telephone service. Massachusetts law requires regulated utility companies to offer discounted rates to customers who receive public assistance benefits and meet income limits.

Regulated companies include:

- Bay State Gas
- Berkshire Gas
- Blackstone Gas
- KeySpan (Boston Gas, Colonial Gas, Essex Gas)
- Fitchburg Gas and Electric Company/Unitil
- National Grid (Massachusetts Electric Company)
- New England Gas
- Western Massachusetts Electric Company
- NSTAR Electric and NSTAR Gas (was Boston Edison Company, Cambridge Electric, COMElectric, COMGas)

Electricity or gas supplied by a municipal gas or electric department, a company that has the name of a city or town in its name, are not required to offer low-income discount rates. Some do, however, voluntarily offer these rates. Discount amounts vary widely, but range from 10 to 25 percent of the bill. Eligibility requirements vary from company to company also. Customers should contact their municipal utility company directly for specific information.

To view the 2008 Federal Poverty Guidelines, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website: <http://aspe.hhs.gov/poverty/08Poverty.shtml>.

## HEATING OIL COOPERATIVES

Oil cooperatives (co-op) can save members money on their heating oil, services, and heating equipment. Co-ops supply members with heating oil for an average 10 to 20 percent discount. They may require a membership fee (averaging \$5.00 to \$25.00 per year) but may offer free membership to elders, persons with disabilities, or low-income households. Co-ops may also have options for members to set up payment plans and budget accounts with oil dealers.

### **Cape Self Reliance Corp.**

[www.reliance.org/oil.htm](http://www.reliance.org/oil.htm)

1-888-808-0120

### **Center for Environmental Technology**

[www.cetonline.org](http://www.cetonline.org)

(413) 445-4556

### **Co-op Power**

[www.cooppower.coop](http://www.cooppower.coop)

(413) 772-8898 Western Massachusetts

1-877-266-7543 toll free

### **Mass. Energy Consumers Alliance**

[www.massenergy.com](http://www.massenergy.com)

1-800-287-3950

### **The Oil Buying Network**

[www.oilbuyingnetwork.com](http://www.oilbuyingnetwork.com)

1-800-649-7473

## HEATING UTILITY SHUT-OFFS

Consumers who are facing utility shut-offs may contact the Attorney General's Consumer Hotline at (617) 727-8400 for information and/or mediation services to assist in resolving the situation. Consumers may also wish to consult a private attorney, or seek other legal representation.

### Home Heating

Under certain circumstances, a heating utility is not allowed to shut off the heat, even for non-payment. These circumstances are:

- Senior households where everyone in the household is age 65 or older;
- Low-income families with infants, under the age of 12 months and the service was not terminated for non-payment before the birth of the child;
- People with serious illnesses who cannot afford to pay their utility bills;
- Tenants whose landlords are responsible for utility bills;
- Low-income people who would be without heat during the winter.

To apply, contact the utility provider's customer service department and request a utility protection form to complete and return to the company. The utility may request verification of the protection category, such as a child's birth certificate, written proof of illness from a physician, and/or proof of inability to pay based upon income.

When applying, customers should track their date of contact with the utility company requesting protection, and keep copies of any correspondence (forms, letters) with the utility company. In the event that the request is denied, customers may appeal the decision by contacting the Consumer Division of the Massachusetts Department of Public Utilities at 1-800-392-6066, or by email at [consumer.complaint@state.ma.us](mailto:consumer.complaint@state.ma.us).

### Winter Moratorium

There is also a winter moratorium in place every year from November 15 to March 15. During those months, gas and electric companies cannot shut off service because of inability to pay. This moratorium does not apply however, if service was shut off for non-payment before November 15. Utility charges will continue to be applied during this period and the customer will still owe the utility company for the provided service. Consumers can still pay what they can afford during this time and should contact their utility provider to negotiate a payment plan to cover these accrued heating charges.

### Water Service or Other Government-Provided Utilities

For billing disputes with a local water company or other Massachusetts city, town, or regional public service provider, consumers should contact the local city or town hall or other government utility provider directly.

## CONSERVATION AND WEATHERIZATION RESOURCES

### **Appliance Management Program**

[http://www.masssave.com/customers/index.php?page\\_function=detail&promotion\\_id=46&zip\\_code=02210&source=Electric&company\\_id=17](http://www.masssave.com/customers/index.php?page_function=detail&promotion_id=46&zip_code=02210&source=Electric&company_id=17)

1-800-322-3223

This program involving utilities such as National Grid and NStar and Community Action Programs throughout the state helps reduce energy costs for low-income customers with electricity bills averaging more than \$30 per month. An energy manager from a local Community Action agency will provide an appliance analysis indicating how much each appliance costs to operate and potential savings. Participants also may qualify for other items including ENERGY STAR refrigerators and lighting, water saving measures, and insulation and air sealing measures.

### **Bay State Gas/Berkshire Gas Partners in Energy Program**

<http://www.baystategas.com/forhome/eneraudit.htm>

1-800-232-0120

Bay State Gas' Partners in Energy Program provides energy-saving tips and incentives to help increase the energy efficiency of homes. BSG will pay 50 percent of the cost, up to \$1,500, to help weatherize homes or apartments. Additional rebates are also available to reduce the cost of replacing inefficient heating systems, water heaters, and old, leaky windows. Partners in Energy Program offers free, no-obligation home energy assessments and provides an Offer Sheet report listing energy-saving measures that qualify for incentives. Berkshire Gas offers a similar program, and will pay for up to 100 percent of the cost of energy efficiency measures for low-income households.

### **Boston Building Material Co-op/Building Materials Resource Center**

[www.bbmc.com](http://www.bbmc.com)

(617) 422-2262

Boston Building Materials Co-op (BBMC) is a not-for-profit consumer co-op that is open to the public whose purpose is to provide high quality materials at a reasonable cost and to teach people how to maintain and improve their homes. BBMC sells products in the areas of: window repair, kitchen and bath, windows and doors, storm products, weatherization, and green products.

### **Center for Ecological Technology (CET)**

[www.cetonline.org](http://www.cetonline.org)

(413) 445-4556 Pittsfield

(413) 586-7350 Northampton

CET provides residents, businesses and communities with the tools to make it easy and affordable to carry out daily life in a more environmentally sustainable manner. Their work focuses on energy efficiency, renewable energy, waste management, and environmental education. CET's mission is "to research, develop, demonstrate and promote those technologies which have the least disruptive impact on the natural ecology of the Earth."

### **Cool Smart with ENERGY STAR**

[www.mycoolsmart.com](http://www.mycoolsmart.com)

1-800-473-1105

This program offers customers a mail-in rebate of \$300 for the purchase and installation of high efficiency central air conditioning units and air source heat pumps that meet or exceed the new 2006 ENERGY STAR minimum standard Seasonal Energy Efficiency Rating (SEER) of 14, and a Heating Seasonal Performance Factor (HSPF) of 8.2 (for heat pumps only). In addition, a new Quality Installation Verification service is available through a growing number of participating contractors.

### **Energy Bucks**

[www.energybucks.com](http://www.energybucks.com)

Energy Bucks is an initiative created by The Massachusetts Association for Community Action (MASSCAP), Low-Income Energy Affordability Network (LEAN), and group of the state's electric and gas utility companies and energy efficiency organizations. The initiative was created to promote the programs such as: fuel assistance, discount utility rates, and energy efficiency and weatherization services.

### **Home Energy Loss Prevention Service (HELPS) Hotline**

[www.munihelps.org](http://www.munihelps.org)

(888) 333-7525

Customers of electric and gas municipal utilities participating in HELPS may call the toll-free hotline with any questions concerning energy conservation in their home. The staff has a wealth of information about residential energy conservation, and can provide it either by mail or email, or can assist or direct consumers to a number of different Web-based resources providing online information on many conservation measures, as well as online energy audits you can conduct on your own.

### **Home Energy Saver Web Tool**

<http://hes.lbl.gov/>

The Home Energy Saver is designed to help consumers identify the best ways to save energy in their homes, and find the resources to make the savings happen. The Home Energy Saver was the first Internet-based tool for calculating energy use in residential buildings. The project is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), as part of the national ENERGY STAR Program for improving energy efficiency in homes, with previous support from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's PATH program, and the California Energy Commission's Public Interest Energy Research (PIER) program.

**Massachusetts New Homes with ENERGY STAR**

1-800-628-8413

[MAEnergyStar@icfi.com](mailto:MAEnergyStar@icfi.com)

The Massachusetts New Homes with ENERGY STAR program is a new construction program based on an energy efficiency standard developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA's initiative is supported in Massachusetts by a consortium of utility companies and energy efficiency service providers who collaborate to promote the benefits of energy-efficient, high performance homes. Homebuilders are eligible for various benefits for building ENERGY STAR qualified new homes and homebuyers demanding homes built to these specifications.

**National Grid EnergyWise Program**

1-800-889-0096

[http://www.nationalgridus.com/masselectric/home/energyeff/4\\_energy\\_svcs.asp](http://www.nationalgridus.com/masselectric/home/energyeff/4_energy_svcs.asp)

National Grid's EnergyWise service is available for customers living in one of the following structures: Multi-family facility; Condominium; and Facility consisting of five or greater dwelling units. National Grid will provide services to the entire complex in coordination with the owner, property manager, or condominium association. Through this program, a facility may qualify for a free energy analysis, lighting system upgrades or other electric efficiency measures. If the facility is electrically heated, your facility may qualify for insulation and air sealing. Installation of some energy efficiency measures requires a customer co-payment.

**U.S. Department of Energy, Energy Savers Web Tool**

[www.energysavers.gov](http://www.energysavers.gov)

On this U.S. Government Web site residents can find information to help save energy in a home, business, vehicle, or industrial plant. The links on the Energy Savers provide resources available across Federal agencies for homeowners, contractors and builders, building managers, realtors, state agencies, drivers and fleet managers, and industry managers.

**Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP)**

[http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eheadterminal&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Community+Development&L2=Housing+Energy+Programs&sid=Ehead&b=terminalcontent&f=dhcd\\_cd\\_wap\\_wap&csid=Ehead](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eheadterminal&L=3&L0=Home&L1=Community+Development&L2=Housing+Energy+Programs&sid=Ehead&b=terminalcontent&f=dhcd_cd_wap_wap&csid=Ehead)

1-800-632-8175

The Low-Income Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) assists low-income households in reducing heating bills by providing comprehensive home energy conservation services. Eligibility is based on household income no more than 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level. Priority of service is given to those households with elderly, disabled, children (6 and under), LIHEAP high-energy users, and Native Americans. Homeowners and tenants with their landlord permission are eligible.

## ENERGY EFFICIENCY MORTGAGES AND LOANS

### **Clean Energy Choice Program**

[www.masstech.org/CleanEnergyOrg](http://www.masstech.org/CleanEnergyOrg)

(508) 870-0312

One goal of the Clean Energy Choice® program is to educate ratepayers about renewable energy, clean power, and the options consumers have. Through the program, the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative matches customers' voluntary payments in two ways: through matching grants for communities that help towns and cities fund renewable energy projects; and by providing low-income matching grants for clean energy projects throughout Massachusetts.

### **Commonwealth Solar**

[www.masstech.org/solar](http://www.masstech.org/solar)

[cs@masstech.org](mailto:cs@masstech.org)

(508) 439-5700

Commonwealth Solar provides rebates through a non-competitive application process for the installation of PV projects at residential, commercial, industrial, and public facilities. Non-residential projects are eligible for rebates for PV projects up to 500 kilowatts (kW) and residential projects are eligible for up to 5 kW. The applicant (and project site) must be a customer of a Massachusetts investor-owned electric utility.

### **Energy Efficient Mortgages**

[http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bldrs\\_lenders\\_raters.energy\\_efficient\\_mortgage](http://www.energystar.gov/index.cfm?c=bldrs_lenders_raters.energy_efficient_mortgage)

An Energy Efficient Mortgage (EEM) gives borrowers the opportunity to finance cost-effective, energy-saving measures as part of a single mortgage and stretch debt-to-income qualifying ratios on loans thereby allowing borrowers to qualify for a larger loan amount and a better, more energy-efficient home.

### **Massachusetts New Homes with ENERGY STAR**

1-800-628-8413

[MAEnergyStar@icfi.com](mailto:MAEnergyStar@icfi.com)

The Massachusetts New Homes with ENERGY STAR program is a new construction program based on an energy efficiency standard developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA's initiative is supported in Massachusetts by a consortium of utility companies and energy efficiency service providers who collaborate to promote the benefits of energy-efficient, high performance homes.

### **MassSAVE HEAT Loan Program**

[http://www.masssave.com/about/heat\\_loan.php](http://www.masssave.com/about/heat_loan.php)

The HEAT Loan Program provides customers the opportunity to apply for a zero-percent loan from participating lenders to assist customers with the installation of qualified energy efficient improvements in their homes. The loans are available up-to \$10,000 with terms up-to 7 years. To apply for the loan, the customer must own and reside in a one to four family residence and obtain a Home Energy Assessment through the MassSAVE Program. Visit MassSAVE's [participating lender list](#) to find a lender.



**Small Renewables Initiative**

[http://www.masstech.org/renewableenergy/small\\_renewables.htm](http://www.masstech.org/renewableenergy/small_renewables.htm)

(508) 870-0312, ext. 1273

The Small Renewables Initiative (SRI) provides rebates for the installation of wind and small hydroelectric projects that are up to 10 kilowatts and located at residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and public facilities. The applicant (and project site) must be a customer of a Massachusetts investor-owned electric distribution utility.



# APPENDIX B: FITCHBURG ROUNDTABLE

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## FITCHBURG WINTER HEATING AND ENERGY ROUNDTABLE

SEPTEMBER 24, 2008

FITCHBURG PUBLIC LIBRARY AUDITORIUM

### SPEAKERS

- Mayor Lisa Wong, City of Fitchburg
- Kevin Conroy, Chief of the Business and Labor Bureau within the Attorney General's Office
- Chief Kevin D. Roy, Fitchburg Fire Department
- Kathleen McDermott, Executive Director of Montachusett Opportunity Council
- Mary Ann Kobylanski, LIHEAP Director for the New England Farm Workers Council
- Massachusetts State Representative Stephen L. DiNatale
- Massachusetts State Representative Jennifer L. Flanagan
- Tom Szocik, Executive Director of the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority
- George Gantz, Senior Vice President for Customer Service and Communications for Unitil Corporation
- Ed Terceiro, Executive Vice President of Mount Wachusett Community College
- Robert Ansin, Chief Executive Officer of MassInnovation
- Frank Gorke, Director of the Division of Energy Efficiency with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources

## SUMMARY

The Fitchburg Public Library was the site of the first Winter Heating and Energy Roundtable, co-hosted by Attorney General Martha Coakley and Fitchburg Mayor Lisa Wong. Invited speakers and attendees noted that the greater Fitchburg area, like New England in general, is being significantly impacted by recent unprecedented increases and continued volatility in the costs for heating and energy.

Mayor Wong has taken several proactive steps to address the issue on two concurrent tracks. She recently convened an Energy Task Force which is responsible for helping vulnerable residents (including low-income families and the elderly) manage the immediate financial crisis of paying for heat and utilities this winter, while staying warm and safe. This multidisciplinary group is working to make sure that all Fitchburg residents are informed of fuel assistance programs as well as services to help make their homes and businesses more energy efficient.

Under her leadership, Fitchburg has taken significant steps to support the development of alternative, renewable sources of energy (such as supporting residential zoning ordinances to allow for wind generated power) and has brought in experts to conduct energy audits for Fitchburg's municipal buildings, which has resulted in the implementation of energy conservation measures.

Chief Kevin D. Roy, of the Fitchburg Fire Department, addressed the public safety implications of sustained inability to manage heating bills. Along with fire officials throughout the state, he is concerned about the use of "improvised heating," when people turn on ovens or gas burners on stoves to stay warm, and the dangers associated with the use of non-UL approved extension cords or electric space heaters and the improper use of wood stoves and pellet stoves. These heating methods create both a carbon monoxide problem and also a fire hazard. Associated with the heating and energy cost challenges, the economic downturn and the foreclosure crisis have resulted in over 200 vacant buildings in the city. Improperly secured, these buildings may become home to squatters whose use of improvised heating places the city and its residents at great risk of injury, death, or property loss from fire. Chief Roy is addressing the need for public awareness by participating in the DFS [Keep Warm, Keep Safe](#) campaign and is working with the Mayor's Task Force to find strategies to monitor the city's vacant buildings.

Fitchburg social services agencies are already working cooperatively. Kathleen McDermott, Executive Director of the [Montachusett Opportunity Council](#) (MOC), and Mary Ann Kobylanski, LIHEAP Program Director of the [New England Farm Workers Council](#), offer fuel assistance, weatherization and energy audits, heating system repair and replacement and appliance monitoring and replacement. The MOC is currently conducting outreach about its services to all the Councils on Aging and senior centers throughout the region and is also developing a neighborhood outreach strategy utilizing volunteers who will check on neighbors, especially the elderly, during the winter to ensure that no residents are without heat or in need.

The area's legislative delegation includes State Representatives Stephen DiNatale and Jennifer L. Flanagan. Each addressed legislative efforts to secure more LIHEAP funding. Each advocated on behalf of looking at outreach to vulnerable populations across issues, recommending that efforts on

behalf of low-income individuals and families incorporate broad public health and safety information as well as information about all home heating programs, food pantries, or emergency shelter for which they might be eligible.

Fitchburg has also made significant investments in long-term economic development in order to retain manufacturing jobs and support its' business community. Tom Szocik, Executive Director of the Fitchburg Redevelopment Authority, spoke about the 410,000 square foot Simonds Saw and Steel Company facility, which has been in continuous operation in Fitchburg since 1832.

Simonds, a major employer in Fitchburg, has been reducing its workforce, from a high of 1,600 in 1965, to 584 in 2004, and relocating production to less expensive regions of the U.S. and outside of the U.S. The company cited the high cost of energy as one of the major reasons for moving operations. Simonds consumes approximately 13 million kilowatt hours of electricity a year, costing the company more than \$1.5 million annually. Fitchburg has embarked on an innovative partnership, leasing land from Simonds and building a \$42 million biomass fuel power plant on the site. The power plant would supply Simonds with electricity (at a fixed rate for roughly half the current cost) for a 10-year period, allowing the company to remain in Fitchburg as an employer and industrial taxpayer.

Fitchburg hopes to replicate this partnership and attract additional manufacturers to its new biomass-fueled industrial business park, bringing much-needed employers and revenue to the city.

Mount Wachusett Community College has become a national model for its focus on sustainability, energy conservation, renewable energy, co-generation, and CO<sub>2</sub> reduction. Ed Terceiro, Executive Vice President there, described how the college has converted from an all-electric campus (with utility bills which were on average double that of its sister colleges throughout the state) to a biomass close-looped hydronic system funded by grants from the U.S. Department of Energy and the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust Fund. The conversion to biomass has netted the college a savings of \$3 million from the period of 2002 to 2008, and reduced CO<sub>2</sub> levels by 24 percent – posting some of the highest reductions of CO<sub>2</sub> in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

New initiatives at the college include: the installation of a 100-kilowatt photovoltaic array roof on campus, which, once completed, will be one of the larger installations of any of the colleges in the Commonwealth; and the installation of one (possible two) 1.65-megawatt wind turbines which have the potential to become a revenue stream for the college. In addition, the college has partnered with Veterans Homestead, Inc., and will provide 20 green-certified housing units for disabled veterans returning with severe injuries from Iraq or Afghanistan.

Robert Ansin, Chief Executive Officer of MassInnovation, transformed a 130-year-old textile mill facility from a shoe factory to a thriving mixed-use, green, urban complex featuring the largest geothermal infrastructure in New England. One of the highlights of the complex are the Anwell Heritage Apartments, 86 apartments units for seniors who enjoy monthly energy costs (which include electricity, air conditioning, and heat) of \$50 to \$60 a month without burning any fossil fuels.

George Gantz, Senior Vice President for Customer Service and Communications of the Unitil Corporation, spoke about energy policy at the state level, advanced metering infrastructure, efforts to increase energy efficiency programs and funding, and efforts to increase renewable energy development. Gantz also referenced programs for income-eligible customers, including discount rates available on both electricity and natural gas and an arrears management program.

Gantz also noted a factor which is specific to the service area in north central Massachusetts. This area has the highest percentage of eligible low-income customers of any utility in the state and has the lowest median income of utility service areas in the state, placing a tremendous burden on the utility customer base. The region has a higher than average need for low-income support services and these services are being paid for by a customer base that's significantly below the average median income for Massachusetts. It is for this reason that Unitil is recommending that Massachusetts consider finding statewide sources of support for some of the utility-sponsored programs in order to balance those benefits across as broad a base as possible.

Frank Gorke, Director of the Division of Energy Efficiency with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER), talked about Governor Patrick's Energy Task Force as well as recent efforts by the Governor to increase LIHEAP funding for Massachusetts. Gorke also encouraged municipalities to contact the DOER's Green Communities Division recently created to implement the recently enacted [Green Communities Act](#). The mission of the Green Communities Division is to help cities and towns to manage municipal energy operations. Townsend and Gardner have already participated in their energy audit program and other Western Massachusetts communities' audits are being scheduled. Municipalities are also encouraged to consider applying for the DOER's grant program (up to \$10 million dollars a year will be available) to help cities and towns become greener and more sustainable.

Fitchburg has evidenced leadership in preparing for the upcoming winter heating season. It has in place a number of strategies to inform its residents about the financial, public health and public safety implications of rising energy costs and has instituted measures to care for its most vulnerable. In addition, it is talking steps to address municipal energy use and is fostering a business climate which supports renewable, green sources of energy.

# APPENDIX C: PLYMOUTH ROUNDTABLE

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## PLYMOUTH WINTER HEATING AND ENERGY ROUNDTABLE

OCTOBER 1, 2008

PLYMOUTH TOWN HALL

### SPEAKERS

- Senate President Therese Murray
- Lisa Spencer, Director of Energy Programs for the South Shore Community Action Council
- Chief G. Edward Bradley, Plymouth Fire Department
- Brian Kuhn, Chair of the Town of Plymouth Energy Committee
- Richard Quintal, Chair of the Plymouth Board of Selectmen
- Bill Driscoll, Chair of the Town of Plymouth Finance Committee
- Joan Meschino, Chair of the Hull Board of Selectmen
- Frank Gorke, Director of the Division of Energy Efficiency with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
- Mark Reed, Director of Public Affairs for NSTAR
- Peter Forman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce
- Virginia LeClair, Environmental Coordinator for the Town of Dedham
- Scott Ridley, Energy Consultant with Ridley & Associates, Inc.

## SUMMARY

Plymouth Town Hall was the site of the second Winter Heating and Energy Roundtable and was co-hosted by Attorney General Martha Coakley and Senate President Therese Murray. Plymouth has engaged an energy consultant and is benefitting from an [Energy Task Committee](#) which has been studying all facets of the town's energy practices. Plymouth is considering converting landfill areas into solar "Bright Fields" and has been an early adopter of wind-based sources of energy, benefiting from its natural asset of being located on a windy coast. Plymouth currently has 15 projects underway to develop this wind resource, including plans to build two new wind turbines near its waste water treatment facility and a plan to situate a wind turbine at Plymouth South High School.

In addition to the work of the task force, Plymouth has been taking steps to assist its low-income residents who will need help paying for fuel this heating season. The South Shore Community Action Council (SSCAC) is gearing up for another increase in requests for help. Residents facing increasing heating bills are already struggling to manage paying for food, medication and medical costs. Last year the SSCAC received 11,082 requests for LIHEAP funding. This was a 7.5 percent increase from 2006. While fuel prices have decreased since the summer, they are higher than 2007 and the price is expected to remain volatile. SSCAC staff anticipates an unprecedented level requests for assistance.

In 2007, 28 percent of requests came from households that were applying for the first time. There is no reason to believe that a similar increase is not in the offing. Some of these new applicants may exceed income guidelines and thus be ineligible for LIHEAP. SSCAC has conducted public outreach throughout its 39-town service area. SSCAC has also recently created a brochure to assist those whose income exceeds LIHEAP eligibility guidelines. Resources listed include the Citizens Energy oil program, the Good Neighbor Energy Fund, and local oil co-ops.

G. Edward Bradley, Chief of the Plymouth Fire Department, addressed the public safety implications of sustained inability to manage heating bills. He shared his concern that this winter season would see a dramatic increase statewide in both carbon monoxide calls and poisonings and warned that home fires could result in injuries, both to civilians and to the fire service. Chief Bradley noted that during the 2007-2008 heating season, seven out of 10 building fires in Plymouth were related to the improper use of alternative heating sources such as fireplaces and fireplace inserts, or coal, wood and pellet stoves. He urged residents to follow the recommendations of the DFS [Keep Warm, Keep Safe](#) public awareness campaign.

Chief Bradley noted that in Plymouth, 6 percent of homes that had fires did not have working smoke detectors. In response, he is stepping up his department's fire safety education and urged participants to bring these important public safety messages back to their respective communities. Plymouth's public safety officials are already working cooperatively to reach out to vulnerable members of the community. The Plymouth County Sheriff's Department sponsors a program for elders called "Are You Okay?" in which a series of automated calls that go out to elders on a daily basis. If the senior does not answer the phone or if they have a problem, they are referred to a call-back list and receive follow-up visits from volunteers or from public safety personnel.



Conservation and Energy Efficiency Municipal departments in Plymouth are looking at every measure that can be taken to reduce energy use and therefore costs. Brian Kuhn, Chair of the Town of Plymouth Energy Committee, and Fire Chief Bradley are examining energy conservation measures for both fire service vehicles and facilities. In addition, the Plymouth School Department recently hired an energy manager and has put into place a program of energy saving measures that have saved the town close to \$1 million dollars. Plymouth 20-20 (subtitled a Clear Vision of Plymouth's Energy Usage) is a town-wide collaboration with the goal to produce an equivalent of 100 percent of that Plymouth's municipal electricity through renewable power by the town's 400th anniversary, 2020. Richard Quintal, Chair of the Town of Plymouth Board of Selectmen, and Bill Driscoll, Chair of the Town of Plymouth Finance Committee, described additional projects in various stages of development including a "green" movie studio (the first of its kind in the country) and the building of a "green" school, stressing that Plymouth has made renewable energy a priority. Scott Ridley, Energy Consultant with Ridley & Associates, Inc., has been working with Plymouth to help the town meet its ambitious goals for Plymouth 20-20 by identifying the top 10 municipal buildings with high energy usage, conducting energy audits. Plymouth began with lighting and heating and cooling system improvements or upgrades, and has also been looking at eventually switching over to more fuel efficient vehicles. In the short-term, they are developing policies and suggestions around fuel efficiency for vehicles, including no idling policies for the police department and fire department.

The Town of Hull receives five to six inquiries each week from around the country and from around the world to learn more about their efforts in sustainable energy sourced by wind power. Joan Meschino, Chairman of the Town of Hull Board of Selectmen, noted with pride that Hull's first windmill was erected in the early 1900s and that their first "modern" wind turbine was built in the 1980s. They constructed a second and third turbine in 2001 and 2006, respectively which have helped meet municipal power needs and have also become revenue generators for the town.

Environmental Coordinator for the Town of Dedham Virginia LeClair discussed the work of the Dedham Renewable Energy Committee. The charge of the committee is to study and implement a sustainability agenda to help the town conserve energy, improve public health, and create a healthier natural environment. Some of their initiatives include a brochure to educate residents about energy efficiency. They are now working on centralizing all the information they can locate on green technology rebates and grants which are currently spread over numerous websites. In addition, Dedham was one of the first towns in the state to participate in the Massachusetts Technology Collaborative's Green School Initiative. As a result, the recently built Dedham Middle School is a high performance green building.

In coming months, all municipalities will have the opportunity to participate in sustainability and efficiency programming. Under the [Green Communities Act](#), the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER) Green Communities Division will help cities and towns to manage municipal energy operations. Frank Gorke, Director of Division of Energy Efficiency with DOER, urged municipalities are to consider applying for the DOER's grant program (up to \$10 million a year will be available) to help cities and towns become greener and more sustainable.

The business community is also challenged by increasing and volatile energy costs. Fishing fleets in the region particularly hard hit as the cost of gasoline to power their boats rises. According to Peter Forman, President and Chief Executive Officer of the South Shore Chamber of Commerce, fishermen sell since their products at auction, setting the price by supply and demand, and they cannot pass on their increased costs to consumers though they are struggling to stay in business. Forman added that some industries have managed to find some creative solutions. One tire and auto maintenance company on the South Shore has invested in waste oil burners. They use the waste oil from oil changes to heat their building. Another business took 25 positions that were housed in their main headquarters and turned those into home based positions.

Mark Reed, Director of Public Affairs for NSTAR, suggested that commercial and industrial customers take advantage of energy efficiency programs provided by their local utility. In addition to ratepayer funded energy audits, businesses in the NSTAR region who are anticipating new construction can ask NSTAR to consult with their architect to make sure that all the energy efficiency that's possible can be built into the building. NSTAR also offers financial incentives along with technical assistance on energy efficiency.

Plymouth, and its neighboring communities, has shown leadership in preparing for the upcoming winter heating season. It has in place a number of strategies to inform its residents about the financial, public health and public safety implications of rising energy costs and has instituted measures to care for its most vulnerable. In addition, it is taking steps to address municipal energy use and is fostering a business climate which supports renewable, green sources of energy.

# APPENDIX D: HOLYOKE ROUNDTABLE

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## HOLYOKE WINTER HEATING AND ENERGY ROUNDTABLE

OCTOBER 2, 2008

HERITAGE STATE PARK VISITORS' CENTER

### SPEAKERS

- Mayor Michael Sullivan, City of Holyoke
- State Senator Michael R. Knapik
- Chief David LaFond, Holyoke Fire Department
- Chief Anthony Scott, Holyoke Police Department
- Joseph Rosenberg, Energy Director with Springfield Partners for Community Action
- Stephen C. Huntley, Executive Director of Valley Opportunity Council
- Kathleen Anderson, Director of the Holyoke Office of Planning and Development
- Massachusetts State Representative Michael F. Kane, Vice Chairman of the Committee on Telecommunication, Utilities and Energy
- James Lavelle, Manager of Holyoke Gas and Electric and President of the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce
- Michael Sherman, Director of Energy Efficiency Programs for the Massachusetts Division of Energy Efficiency, with the Department of Energy Resources

## SUMMARY

The Heritage State Park Visitors' Center in Holyoke was the site of the third Winter Heating and Energy Roundtable co-hosted by Attorney General Martha Coakley and Holyoke Mayor Michael Sullivan. Holyoke is an early adopter of innovative energy practices. Its founding as a community was the result of harnessing the water power of the Connecticut River. Holyoke's Mt. Tom is the home of the oldest wind turbine in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, and the city is currently mapping wind energy areas to determine whether or not additional investment in wind might be cost effective.

Mayor Sullivan and State Senators Michael R. Knapik and Michael F. Kane acknowledge that the community must balance long-term investment in energy with the immediate needs of residents struggling to cope with increasing costs for food, housing, heat, and medical care. This will likely be a difficult winter in the city of Holyoke and in surrounding communities. Food pantry inventories are at critical lows as families who have never sought help before are citing fuel and heating costs the reason they are seeking food aid for the first time.

All levels of government need to provide resources at this critical time. Municipalities in particular are planning for emergency scenarios including the possibility that some residents may need access to emergency warming shelters. In Holyoke there are multi-agency councils which include nonprofit and faith-based groups, meeting now to identify vulnerable residents and provide information, education, referrals, and resources to help residents meet a multitude of basic needs.

Extensive education about the public safety risks that result when residents cannot afford to pay for adequate heat are an important part of the municipalities' response. Each winter the Holyoke Fire Department has seen an increase in carbon monoxide poisonings and fires related to including inadequate maintenance of heating systems, a lack of smoke or carbon monoxide detectors, or the use of alternative heating devices. The city of Holyoke has had several serious incidents involving carbon monoxide poisoning and passed an ordinance requiring carbon monoxide detectors years in advance of the statewide mandate. The Holyoke Fire Department also has a program which offers free smoke detectors and free installation for household's with young children or senior citizens.

The Holyoke Police Department is involved in safety and outreach as well. The department has an ombudsperson for any elderly resident in the city who presents with a problem. The Police work closely with the Mayor's Office, Health Department, Fire Department and Public Works Department to identify seniors who might need help with food, heat, medical care, or other issues, and to help reduce obstacles or bureaucracy to make sure that the proper resources are provided.

Holyoke Police Chief Anthony Scott has also instituted measures to reduce the use of fuel. Department policy requires all officers in the department to stop driving the police cruiser for one hour every day and to get out and walk. The "Park and Walk Program" has benefits in addition to the conservation of fuel, serving to increase the officers' ability to talk to and connect with residents and to strengthen community relationships.

To empower individuals to take personal steps to decrease heating expenses, Springfield Partners for Community Action offers energy audits and weatherization services for eligible, low-income households and served 229 households in 2007 and 2008, saving each an estimated 150 gallons worth of fuel oil.

This fuel savings helps stretch the amount of LIHEAP assistance which community action programs can distribute, allowing more families to be served, according to Stephen C. Huntley, Executive Director of the Valley Opportunity Council (VOC). Last year the VOC served 11,700 households and is seeing a busier start this year with 20 percent more families than last year already applying for assistance as of October 2, 2008.

City of Holyoke human service and public safety agencies join with the local utility, Holyoke Gas and Electric, for biweekly meetings which provide an opportunity to address energy issues on a multitude of levels including emergency planning, low-income assistance and strategies to help the municipality become more energy efficient.

As a result of the volatility in the price of natural gas as a commodity, the region's over-dependence on natural gas places businesses at a competitive disadvantage with companies located in other regions of the country. The Chamber of Commerce hears from its members that competition on a global market coupled with high-energy costs is making it increasingly more difficult for them to stay in Massachusetts. The Chamber recommends that businesses and municipalities explore all available measures to conserve energy, replace inefficient systems, and consider participating in programs sponsored by utilities and state entities to help with these efforts.

The newly-enacted Green Communities Act will support significant changes in how the Commonwealth approaches energy efficiency within Massachusetts, making energy efficiency in particular a top priority for Massachusetts. Of note for the Holyoke region is the opportunity for municipal utilities such as Holyoke Gas and Electric to participate in the [Renewable Energy Trust](#), as well as in the Energy Efficiency Advisory Council which will be composed of representatives across the business, utility and environmental sectors.

Holyoke is continuing its legacy of innovation in energy leadership and innovation in the area of energy use and has in place multi-agency groups which are working to inform residents and businesses about the short-term and long-term strategies necessary to manage the current energy crisis and to plan for a renewable and sustainable energy future.



# APPENDIX E: SALEM ROUNDTABLE

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## SALEM WINTER HEATING AND ENERGY ROUNDTABLE

OCTOBER 3, 2008

SALEM OLD TOWN HALL

### SPEAKERS

- Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, City of Salem
- Chief David Cody, Salem Fire Department
- Laura MacNeil, Deputy Director of the North Shore Community Action Program
- Paul Lanzikos, Executive Director of North Shore Elder Services
- Paul L'Heureux, Director of Facilities for the Salem Public Schools
- Massachusetts State Senator Bruce E. Tarr
- Jeff Barz-Snell, Member of the Salem Renewable Energy Task Force
- Massachusetts State Representative John D. Keenan, Member of the Committee on Telecommunications, Utilities and Energy
- Frank Gorke, Director of the Division of Energy Efficiency, with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources
- Robert Bradford, President of the North Shore Chamber of Commerce

## SUMMARY

The fourth and final Winter Heating and Energy Roundtable, co-hosted by Attorney General Martha Coakley and Salem Mayor Kimberley Driscoll, was held at the Salem Old Town Hall.

Mayor Driscoll called for information sharing and collaboration among agencies and across communities to assist efforts to manage the financial, public health, and public safety implications of rising energy costs. Following the mayor's call to action, David Cody, Chief of the Salem Fire Department, noted that the mayor's office, along with the fire service, police department, emergency responders, elder-serving agencies, and public health agents have established strong communication protocols to alert the appropriate entity of a resident needing assistance.

Fire service personnel are concerned that the winter heating season is historically the period during which the fire department sees the highest number of fires. Chief Cody noted that one- and two-family dwellings accounted for half of all the building fires in Essex County, and that improvised heating was the second leading cause of all residential fires and the second leading cause of all fire deaths. His department is working closely with agencies within Salem to implement the DFS [Keep Warm, Keep Safe](#) campaign.

One example of the campaign is the collaborative work of the North Shore Community Action Program (NSCAP) and the Fire Department. NSCAP offers fuel assistance through LIHEAP and provides energy audits and weatherization services for income eligible residents. All NSCAP case managers will receive training and materials on fire safety from the fire service. Once trained, case workers will be able to detect unsafe situations in client's homes (such as combustible materials stored close to a space heater) and can educate the client about safeguards to help prevent fires.

Representatives from social service agencies in the greater Salem region noted evidence of significant financial need among their clients. Food pantries are already reporting insufficient supply due to increased numbers of individuals needing food. Laura MacNeil, Deputy Director of NSCAP, reported that for the past three weeks they have had applicants lined up outside their door seeking fuel assistance and that the agency had never seen this level of need. Paul Lanzikos, Executive Director of North Shore Elder Services, also noted increases in the number of elders seeking financial assistance, many for the first time. His protective services staff has systems in place for helping elders complete the necessary paperwork to apply for fuel assistance, home weatherization, MassHealth, food stamps, or other types of benefit programs.

In addition to assisting vulnerable residents, municipal departments in Salem are also looking at every measure that can be taken to reduce energy use and therefore costs. Paul L'Heureux, Director of Facilities for Salem Public Schools, has instituted policies which reduced power consumption by 34 percent. Jeff Barz-Snell, a member of the Salem Renewable Energy Task Force which was convened by Mayor Driscoll in 2005, encouraged municipalities to look for every possible opportunity to increase energy efficiency and reduce the community's carbon footprint. The city of Salem has implemented the [Cities for Climate Protection Program](#) in which all municipal buildings and many businesses within Salem go through a process of benchmarking its carbon footprint and



then take proactive, specific steps to reduce consumption. Residents are also encouraged to sign up for the [Green Up Program](#) in which they can elect to have 50 percent or 100 percent of their electricity come from renewable generating sources.

State Representatives John Keenan and Bruce Tarr, and Frank Gorke, Director of the Division of Energy Efficiency at DOER, stressed that it is the goal of state government to make the Commonwealth the cleanest and most energy efficient energy economy in the country. The newly-enacted Green Communities Act will support significant changes in how we approach energy within Massachusetts, making energy efficiency a top priority for the state. Under the [Green Communities Act](#) the DOER will help cities and towns manage municipal energy operations. Frank Gorke urged municipalities are to consider applying for the DOER's grant program (up to \$10 million dollars a year will be available) to help cities and towns become greener and more sustainable.

Robert Bradford, President of the North Shore Chamber of Commerce, stated that businesses throughout the region are being particularly hard hit by energy price volatility and noted that the Chamber's 1,500 business members are already taking steps to maximize the efficiency of every energy dollar they spend.

Salem has evidenced leadership in preparing for the upcoming winter heating season. It has in place a number of strategies to inform its residents about the financial, public health, and public safety implications of rising energy costs and has instituted measures to care for its most vulnerable. In addition, it is taking steps to address municipal energy use and is fostering a business climate which supports renewable, green sources of energy.



**OFFICE OF ATTORNEY GENERAL MARTHA COAKLEY**

One Ashburton Place

Boston, MA 02108

(617) 727-2200

[www.mass.gov/ago](http://www.mass.gov/ago)